

Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**



Corporate Performance Panel
Monday, 19th February, 2018 at 5.00 pm
in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market
Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

Reports marked to follow on the Agenda and/or Supplementary Documents

1. **AGENDA ITEM 7: PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING POLICY - REPORT TO FOLLOW** (Pages 2 - 34)

Contact

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CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	The Corporate Performance Panel		
DATE:	22 nd January 2018		
TITLE:	Update and amendments to the Private Sector Housing Policy		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Policy		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Councillor Adrian Lawrence		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Jo Russell		
OPEN/EXEMPT		WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	Yes

REPORT SUMMARY/COVER PAGE

PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:

The Council administers Disabled Facility Grants(DFGs) on behalf of the Government. The funding for the DFG is paid via the Better Care Fund initially to NCC and then passported to this Council.

The Better Care Fund (BCF)/Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) allocation award has been increased in West Norfolk from £759,000 in 2015/16 to £1,352,170 in 2017/18 and there is an expectation that this allocation will either be maintained or will increase marginally year on year until 2020 to meet with the demand on the service.

The council make a contribution to the BCF/DFG allocation dependant on the financial resources available.

The conditions attached to all capital grant funding pooled through the BCF states that it will need to be allocated on the basis that local plans are jointly developed and agreed with relevant local authorities.

As a result of this colleagues from the district borough have met with representatives from the Norfolk County Council/Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to discuss and agree a plan for the West. In addition to the statutory duty to provide adaptations to the homes of disabled people the following areas have formed part of the planned activity and delivery for 2017/18 and forthcoming years:

- Hospital Discharge – support patients to be discharged from hospital in a timely manner, reducing delays
- Target approaches – proactive use of funding for identified cohorts of people, to ensure they continue to be able to live independently in their home
- Staffing capacity and resources – consider how staffing capacity can be aligned and optimised to ensure timely and effective adaptations.

There are four required outcomes/benefits that form part of the BCF metrics which have to be reported on at a local CCG level:

1. Support people to remain independent
2. Reduce permanent care home admissions
3. Reduce hospital admissions
4. Support discharge from acute services

The purpose of this paper is to recommend changes proposed for the Private Sector

Housing Investment Policy. This Policy has not been updated since 2012 and there is a need to reflect the requirements within the Better Care Fund (BCF) and the DFG Locality plan within the policy.

KEY ISSUES:

A summary of the intended changes are:-

1. Re-Name the policy to Housing Assistance Policy – Mandatory and Discretionary.
2. The policy will cover key areas of assistance which will be written into separate appendices. It allows for minor changes to be made to individual appendices by delegated power to the relevant Director.
3. Adapt Grant – to increase the maximum grant limit to £12,000 and to add a condition of this grant that the council may demand the repayment by the recipient of such part of the grant that exceeds £5,000 (but may not demand an amount in excess of £10,000) if the client disposes of the premises within 10 years of the certified date. Include fast tracking all hospital discharge/hospital admission/referrals received from a health professional cases for ramp works only – exclude the means test process for those cases that would normally require this financial assessment and passport them through the application process.
Provide all minor adaptations where the works cost £1,000 and under without a financial assessment.
4. To create a separate Relocation Grant to a maximum of £6,000 this will offer assistance with removal costs and other associated costs.
5. To introduce a Low Level Preventative Grant for works under £300 – this will include minor adaptations and equipment provision and will target those that would benefit from an early intervention that have a health condition, to prevent the need for further adaptation services in the future.
6. Provide Discretionary Adaptation Assistance – this is a loan for works that exceed the DFG limit of £30,000 available to home owners – to reduce the loan maximum from £15,000 to £10,000 and to include cases where the applicant has been means tested and has a contribution to pay towards the cost of work but where no other financial assistance is available to fund this contribution.
7. Emergency Repair Grant – this is a grant to help vulnerable households with emergency repairs to alleviate the most significant hazards – this will remain. The policy amendment is to increase the maximum grant level to £500 for works and remove the Care & Repair fee of £250
8. Safety and Security Grant – this is a grant to help fund minor repairs to support day to day living and independence. Policy amendment is to change the eligibility in line with the low Level Preventative Grant to assist those with a health condition.
9. The Careline Grant – this grant is to provide access to 24 hour support by way of a community alarm. The policy amendment is to add in a qualifying criteria to include anyone with a diagnosis of dementia or memory difficulties and for anyone with a direct referral from health to avoid delayed transfer of care.
10. The formation of Housing Review Panel to make some decisions regarding policy administration. Senior officers from other services and departments including Legal Services and Financial Services may on occasion be invited to attend. A quorum for the panel will comprise a chair and at least two other officers from the list below:

- Service Manager
- IHAT Manager
- Housing Services Manager
- Senior Housing Standards officer

The aim of the panel is to provide a formalised system for unusual cases to be discussed and considered on their individual merits, thus promoting consistent decision making. In some cases the panel will determine the course of action, in others where the situation may set a significant precedent; the panel will present a report to the Portfolio Holding Council Cabinet Member and Director for a decision. Minor changes to the policy which do not affect the broad scope of the policy may from time to time be made by the Director in consultation with the portfolio holding council cabinet member.

11. Small Projects or Initiatives – to add an appendices covering any small project or initiatives that may be funded internally or externally.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

The intended changes made within the Private Sector Housing Investment Policy reflect the requirements of the BCF and the DFG Locality Plan. This will ensure the council works collaboratively to improve outcomes across health, social care and housing particularly focusing on reducing hospital and care admissions and supporting early discharge from hospital.

The changes will not only meet these national and local plans but will also increase the speed of processing the adaptations to meet the increase in demand.

It will create a fast-track pathway for the most vulnerable people that require discharge from hospital and residential care to a home environment where they can remain living safely and independently with a reduced care package.

There are no alternative proposals to meet the desired outcome.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To note and approve the policy

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

REPORT DETAIL

1. Introduction/Background

See purpose of the report

2. Proposal/Post Implementation Review/Monitoring Report

See summary of changes

3. Issues for the Panel to Consider

4. Corporate Priorities

Update and amendments to the Private Sector Housing Policy fit within Priority 6 of the Corporate Priorities: Work with our partners on important services for the borough. This states – “we will work closely with partners in health and adult services to improve services for older people”.

5. Financial Implications

Increased Better Care Funding since 2015/16
Increased council contribution to the capital budget

6. Any other Implications/Risks

The risks are that demand is increasing and there is a waiting list

7. Equal Opportunity Considerations

8. Consultation

Duncan Hall
John Greenhalgh
Debbie Gates
Emma Boore
Councillor Adrian Lawrence

9. Conclusion

The recommendations to amend the Policy

10. Background Papers

The draft Housing Assistance Policy



Housing Assistance Policy – Mandatory and Discretionary Assistance



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is required in order to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 (The Order). Article 3 of this Order specifies that Local Authorities may provide, directly or indirectly, assistance to any person for various purposes including those of enabling them to adapt or improve living accommodation or to repair living accommodation.
- 1.2 Article 4 of the Order provides that before exercising the power conferred by Article 3 the Local Housing Authority must have adopted a policy for the provision of such assistance, publicised the policy and made the policy available in certain specified ways.
- 1.3 The Council is required to publish under the Order a policy that sets out its approach to the provision of assistance. A key element of such a policy is how the Council deals with its mandatory responsibilities including the delivery of adaptations under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
- 1.4 In addition to the above there is a mandatory duty to take action in relation to serious (Category 1) hazards identified under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The Council's obligations and powers in relation to this are contained within the Housing Act 2004. In dealing with serious hazards affecting the most vulnerable of households the Council's approach has been to offer assistance to the household to remedy the problem and in line with criteria contained within the policy.
- 1.5 This policy will be subject to review on a biennial basis.
- 1.6 The Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) allocation is part of the pooled health and social care budget now known as the Better Care Fund (BCF). The responsibility for administration has been passed from the Department of Communities and Local Government to the Department of Health. The BCF / DFG allocation has been increased since 2015/16 and will continue to increase marginally until 2020 to meet with the increased demand. The council make a contribution to this fund depending on the financial resources available.

2.0 Policy Aims

- 2.1 To summarise all forms of assistance provided by the Council and to clarify the approach to delivering both mandatory and discretionary grants and loans to assist vulnerable residents.

- 2.2 The policy deals with not only the mandatory assistance provided through disabled facilities grants but also the discretionary range of support made under the Order, to assist the most vulnerable households. The Council have an in-house Handyperson service that provides minor adaptations and repairs such as grab rails, radiator foils, half steps, tap levers, thumb turns and cruising rails. This is offered to those with health related issues and is targeting low level initiatives to those in need to prevent further more complex needs.
- 2.3 The Council will help those households seeking assistance to access independent financial advice and private finance where necessary and appropriate however, for those households unable to access private finance and who therefore cannot help themselves, the Council will continue to provide limited assistance for essential repairs.
- 2.4 In accordance with the Circular 05/2003 Chapter 4 the Council will always consider exceptional cases on their merits.
- 2.5 The Council will ensure that the available capital resources are focussed on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.
- 2.6 The policy provides details of all forms of assistance supported by specific appendices.
- 2.7 The policy provides authority for minor amendments to be made to the specific appendices by delegated power given to the relevant Director.

3.0 Objectives

3.1 The key objectives of the policy will be:

Objective 1 –

To help enable disabled people and people with mobility issues to live independently in their own homes.

Objective 2 –

To tackle housing conditions that represent a hazard to the health and wellbeing of the occupier, focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable of households.

- 3.1 Objective 1 above relates to the mandatory duty to carry out works under the Disabled Facilities Grant programme.
- 3.2 Objective 2 deals with action that will be taken to address Category 1 or 2 hazards (as defined by the Housing Act 2004).
- 3.3 As resources are limited within each financial year a degree of flexibility is required to meet changing needs but these will be taken in priority order according to our statutory duties:

Priority 1

- DFG or adaptation works meeting the eligibility for a mandatory DFG

Priority 2

- Addressing Category 1 and high Category 2 hazards

Priority 3

- Other discretionary assistance as defined within the policy

- 3.4 These priorities will ensure available resources are targeted to ensure that the Council adequately meets its statutory obligations in respect to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.

4.0 The Role of the Home Improvement Agency West Norfolk

- 4.1 The Council's Home Improvement Agency (HIA) will implement and administer all forms of assistance and any financial support available. We will facilitate works connected with adaptations and repairs where appropriate, but beyond this will provide a comprehensive and holistic service in respect to assisting those who need further help with living safely and independently. From time to time there will be small projects or initiatives undertaken by the HIA which may be resourced by external or internal funding, these will be added where appropriate to a separate appendices and may be subject to separate conditions and arrangements.
- 4.2 Housing Review Panel – some decisions regarding policy administration will be made by a Housing Review Panel (HRP).

The HRP group will comprise of:-

Senior officers from other services and departments including Legal Services and Financial Services may on occasion be invited to

attend. A quorum for the panel will comprise a chair and at least two other officers from the list below:

- Service Manager
- IHAT Manager
- Housing Services Manager
- Senior Housing Standards officer

The aim of the panel is to provide a formalised system for unusual cases to be discussed and considered on their individual merits, thus promoting consistent decision making.

In some cases the panel will determine the course of action, in others where the situation may set a significant precedent; the panel will present a report to the Portfolio Holding Council Cabinet Member and Director for a decision.

Minor changes to the policy which do not affect the broad scope of the policy may from time to time be made by the Director in consultation with the portfolio holding council cabinet member

5.0 Assistance Available

5.1 The assistance available from the Council is detailed within eight main appendices:

Mandatory Adaptation Assistance – Disabled Facility Grant (DFG)

Discretionary Adaptation Assistance – Adapt Grant, Relocation Grant, Low level Prevention Grant, Additional Adaptation Assistance (AAA)

Discretionary Repair Assistance – Emergency Repair Grant (ERG), Home Repair Assistance (HRA) and Safety and Security Grant

Discretionary Careline Grant & Financial Eligibility

Eligibility for Financial Assistance (Discretionary Grants and Loans) – Qualifying Benefits

Mandatory Means Test and Means Tested Benefits

Conditions of Financial Assistance – Land Charge/Fees/Interest on Loans

Temporary Projects or Initiatives

These appendices will be subject to regular review in order to ensure that the limited resources available is managed and prioritised in accordance with the above.

- 5.2 Any amendments either as a result of legislative changes or in order to ensure that resources are targeted more appropriately will be approved by an Executive Director and the Portfolio Holding Council Cabinet Member

6.0 Appeals and Exceptional Cases

Any person aggrieved by the way this policy is administered in an individual case has the right of appeal, this appeal should be made to the Housing Review Panel (HRP) for consideration in the first instance and then the Chief Executive if they are not satisfied with the HRP response.

An appeal should be in writing and sent to:

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
King's Court
Chapel Street
King's Lynn
Norfolk
PE30 1EX

The appeal must set out the grounds on which the appeal is based. An appeal will not be considered simply on the grounds that the appellant does not agree with the policy, although any complaint about the general policy will be dealt with by a written response. Further complaints can be addressed through the corporate complaints procedure.

An appeal will therefore only be considered on the grounds that either the adopted policy has not been applied correctly; or that the potential application for assistance is so exceptional that it justifies consideration by the Council outside the normal policy.

The Panel or The Chief Executive will give a full written response to all appeals. It is not possible to set out the detailed criteria that may comprise exceptional circumstances or the type or amount of assistance that the Council may offer.

Each appeal will be treated on the individual circumstances of the case and will be judged against the particular financial circumstances of the applicant, the strategic objectives of the Council, other options available to the applicant, the resources available to the Council and the long term public benefit.

Any complaint about the outcome of an appeal can be addressed through the corporate complaints procedure. Details will be included in the decision letter for all appeals.

7.0 Contacts Details

Disabled Facilities Services:

To enquire about Disabled Facility Grants, Adapt Grants, Relocation Grants or Discretionary Adaptation Assistance please contact:

The Integrated Housing Adaptation Team:

Borough Council Kings Lynn and West Norfolk
Kings Court
Chapel Street
Kings Lynn
Norfolk
PE30 1EX

Telephone: 01553 616200

Email: careandrepair@west-norfolk.gov.uk

To enquire about all other assistance please contact the Customer Information Centre on 01553 616200

Appendix 1

i. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant – DFG

The council will award Mandatory Disabled Facility grants (DFG's) according to the governing legislation and guidance issued by Central Government, which determines amongst other things the maximum amount of grant, the type of work that can be funded, the maximum contribution to be made and the test of financial resources that must be applied.

Purpose

To adapt the home of a disabled person to meet their needs in providing access to the property and to the kitchen, bathroom and sleeping facilities. The needs will be assessed and recommended by an Occupational Therapist or suitably trained Assessment Officer that has been deemed competent by the Council.

Eligibility

To qualify for assistance the property must be reasonably and practically capable of being adapted to meet the needs of the disabled person.

To qualify for assistance an applicant should be the home owner or tenant, but the grant is available to help the home to be adapted to meet the needs of any disabled person living in the property and enable them to continue living there.

Qualifying Works

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 lays down the legal framework for the DFG, and sets out the qualifying work, also see the Council's General Guidance regarding the award of Disabled Facilities Grants.

In general the grant can be used to fund a range of measures providing access to the property and the basic facilities within it. Commonly it will provide the following:

- Bathroom adaptation including level access showers
- Stair lifts and the provision of ramps
- Kitchen modifications
- Extensions to provide access to any of the above

Other qualifying works are specified in the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, the 'Package of changes to modernise the programme' published in 2008 and any subsequent amendments

Type and Level of Financial Support

Measures funded by way of a grant (subject to conditions)

Maximum grant limit is presently £30,000. This may be subject to change during the life of the policy, where this occurs the legal grant maxima will be applied. Where the costs of adaptation works are in excess of this limit any eligible applicant will be referred to the Additional Adaptations Assistance section of this policy.

Property Charges:

Where the applicant has an owners interest and in the event of a grant exceeding £5,000, it is a condition of the grant that the Council may demand the repayment by the recipient of such part of the grant that exceeds £5,000 (but may not demand an amount in excess of £10,000) if –

- the recipient disposes (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) of the premises in respect of which the grant was given within 10 years of the certified date; and
- the Council, having considered –
 - the extent to which the recipient of the assistance would suffer financial hardship were they to be required to repay all or any of the assistance provided
 - and all other circumstances as deemed relevant

The repayable amount is not subject to interest.

Appendix 2

Discretionary Adaptation Assistance

- ii. Adapt Grant**
- iii. Relocation Grant**
- iii. Low level Prevention Grant**
- ivi. Discretionary Adaptation Loan**

ii. Adapt Grant

Purpose

To enable disabled people and people with mobility issues to live independently in their own home and to include the provision of equipment as well as adaptations where appropriate.

Eligibility

Adapt is available to home-owners, private and social rented tenants (subject to conditions).

The grant is subject to a mandatory means test except where:-

- A ramp and/or stairlift is required to enable safe discharge from hospital
- Other Hospital Discharge cases as necessary

Any works under a £1,000 will not be subject to the national means test

Qualifying Works

Normally works as defined under the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

Referrals may be made by Occupational Therapists, Assistant Practitioners and those other officers as deemed suitably qualified and competent by the Council.

Where there is a clinical need supported and evidenced by the Assessment Officer works other than those described as mandatory will be considered under the Adapt Grant.

Type and Level of Financial Support

Assistance provided by way of a grant (subject to conditions) up to a value of £12,000 (including all fees and VAT at the prevailing rate).

Property Charges

Where the applicant has an owners interest and in the event of a grant exceeding £5,000, it is a condition of the grant that the Council may demand the repayment by the recipient of such part of the grant that exceeds £5,000 (but may not demand an amount in excess of £10,000) if –

- the recipient disposes (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) of the premises in respect of which the grant was given within 10 years of the certified date; and
- the Council, having considered –
 - the extent to which the recipient of the assistance would suffer financial hardship were they to be required to repay all or any of the assistance provided

And all other circumstances as deemed relevant.

iii. Relocation Grant

Purpose

To provide assistance to a person qualifying for a Mandatory DFG but where the property cannot be practically adapted and to help that person move to a more suitable property.

Assist with relocation (subject to conditions) to a more appropriate property where the cost of such relocation would be less than the provision of adaptations to the existing property.

Eligibility

Relocation is available to home-owners, private and social rented tenants (subject to conditions).

This grant will be subject to the national means test for mandatory grants.

The applicant must be eligible for a Disabled Facility Grant.

Qualifying Works/Considerations

- Legal fees
- Estate agents fees
- Stamp duty
- Land registration fees
- Survey fees
- Electrical and drainage inspection fees
- Removal costs (lowest of at least two quotes)
- Installation of telephone where one was provided previously
- Installation of washing machine or other appliances where installed previously
- Redirection of mail if necessary (for a period of 12 weeks maximum)
- Purchase of curtains and carpets and other fitments (to a maximum of £500 and where it can be evidenced that it is not reasonable to re-use existing carpets, curtains etc.)

These qualifying works are not exclusive and other works can be considered.

Type and Level of Financial Support

Assistance provided by way of a grant (subject to conditions) up to a value of £6,000 (including all fees and VAT at the prevailing rate).

iv. Low Level Prevention Grant

Purpose

To help fund low level prevention measures to reduce and/or delay the need for more costly adaptations. Works to be completed by a Trusted Assessor or a framework contractor.

Eligibility

Available to vulnerable households where the applicant is suffering from ill health or a disability.

Qualifying works

Works such as, but not exclusively:

- Warmth
 - Radiator foils
 - Draught proofing
 - Pipe lagging/hot water cylinder jacket
 - Adjusting heating settings/timings
 - Smoke detector/Carbon Monoxide detector

- Falls prevention
 - Grab and newel rails
 - Bath and shower boards
 - Bed rails
 - Chair and bed raisers
 - Bannisters
 - Cruising rails
 - Half steps
 - Improved lighting

- Independence
 - Tap turners
 - Raised toilet seats and toilet frames
 - Low level dementia works
 - Thumb turns

Type and level of financial support

Assistance provided by way of a grant up to the value of £300.

Limited to two grants in any 12 month period.

Note: Where the applicant is a tenant, any items deemed to be the responsibility of the landlord will not be grant funded and where works are deemed eligible landlords consent will be required.

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v. Discretionary Adaptation Assistance

Purpose

To provide additional assistance where the cost of the work exceeds the maximum Mandatory DFG to adapt the home of a disabled person or in the case of a means test contribution where no other forms of funding can be obtained and where not having the work completed will be detrimental to the person's health.

Available by way of a loan up to a maximum of £10,000.

Eligibility

Available to owner occupiers (subject to conditions) who are in receipt of one of the means tested benefits listed within the Appendix4

The applicant must be in receipt of a Disabled Facility Grant.

Qualifying Works

Top up assistance where works qualifying under the DFG programme exceed the maximum statutory DFG limit (£30,000) or the works relate to a means test contribution.

Normally works as defined under the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

Referrals may be made by Occupational Therapists, Assistant Practitioners and those other assessment officers as deemed suitably qualified and competent by the Council.

Type and level of financial support

Assistance provided by way of a Loan (subject to conditions) up to a value of £10,000 (including all fees and VAT).

The assistance provided is secured by way of a charge on the property via a legal charge.

The assistance becomes repayable when the occupancy condition is breached or on the sale or transfer of the property and should the aforementioned occur within five [5] years of completion of the works an additional 15% becomes repayable.

Upon the assistance becoming repayable the Council will consider;

- the extent to which the recipient of the assistance would suffer financial hardship were they to be required to repay all or any of the assistance provided
- and all other circumstances as deemed relevant

The Housing Review Panel has the discretion to waive repayment of the assistance in cases where the owner can prove exceptional circumstances, which will be defined by financial hardship, the threat of serious anti-social behaviour or an adverse impact on health.

Appendix 3

Discretionary Repair Assistance

- vi. Home Repair Assistance (HRA)**
- vii. Emergency Repair Grant (ERG)**
- viii. Safety and Security Grant**

- vi. Home Repair Assistance (HRA)**

Purpose

The purpose of this financial support is primarily to fund works that help to alleviate the most significant hazards within domestic dwellings that have the potential to impact on the health of the most vulnerable residents. Where this assistance is self-financed or externally funded the householder will have the choice as to the extent of the works but will be guided toward alleviating all serious and potentially serious hazards in the home.

Where no external funding solution is available the Council will consider funding any necessary works by way of a loan (subject to conditions). The scope of the works will be limited to those required to alleviate category 1 hazards and potentially high category 2 hazards as defined under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

Eligibility

In respect of loan assistance provided by the Council, eligibility will be on the basis of owner-occupiers who are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits listed within Appendix 4.

Qualifying works

Under the HHSRS, some properties may, by design, because of the prevailing methods used at the time of construction, have elements that will contribute to a category 1 hazard. For example a property built with solid walls, single glazed sash windows and poor loft insulation, will almost certainly demonstrate a category 1 hazard for Excess Cold. Local authority funding will not be available to remedy this kind of hazard, it will only be available to repair any particular element that contributes to a hazard and is in a state of significant disrepair.

The type and level of financial support

All assistance will be provided by way of a loan (subject to conditions) for works valued between £300 and a maximum of £15,000 (including all fees and VAT at the prevailing rate).

Works below £300 will be addressed by way of an Emergency Repair Grant.

The assistance provided is secured by way of a charge on the property via a registered legal charge.

The assistance becomes repayable when the occupancy condition is breached or upon the sale or transfer of the property. Should the aforementioned occur within five years of completion of the works an additional 15% becomes repayable.

Upon the assistance becoming repayable the Council will consider;

- i) the extent to which the recipient of the assistance would suffer financial hardship were they to be required to repay all or any of the assistance provided,
- ii) And all other circumstances as deemed relevant by the Council.

The Housing Review Panel has the discretion to waive repayment of the assistance in cases where the owner can prove exceptional circumstances, which will be defined by financial hardship, the threat of serious anti-social behaviour or an adverse impact on health.

vii. Emergency Repair Grant

Purpose of grant

To help vulnerable households with emergency repairs to alleviate the most significant hazards.

Eligibility

Owner-occupiers who have owned and are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits listed within Appendix 4.

Qualifying works

Emergency works and temporary repairs to alleviate the most significant hazards, or where the repair would alleviate the need for an application to be made for Home Repair Assistance. Examples of eligible work (but not exclusively):

- Temporary repairs to a roof to prevent water ingress
- Temporary repairs to windows/doors to make them safe or weather tight
- Installation of an RCD to make older wiring safe prior to full re-wiring
- Repair to boiler or installation of an immersion heater so as to provide some heating or hot water prior to the completion of heating system works by another agency, but the wait for such works is excessive under the circumstances.

The type and level of financial support

Measures funded by way of a grant (subject to conditions).

The maximum grant level for works is £500 (including VAT at the prevailing rate).

Limited to one grant in any 12 month period

viii. Safety and Security Grant

Purpose

To help fund measures which improve the safety and security of eligible households. To complete minor repairs to support day to day living and independence (non-emergency works).

Eligibility

Available to vulnerable households where the applicant is suffering from ill health or a disability.

Qualifying works

Works such as, but not exclusively:

- Window and door locks
- Security bolts
- Security lighting (Potential Contractor)
- Access to sanitation including repairs to toilets
- Access to washing including replacement taps to sinks, showers and baths
- Connecting Appliances (Potential contractor)
- Access to lighting and heating including like for like replacement of light fittings (Potential contractor)
- Like for like replacement of switches and sockets (Potential contractor)
- Repairs to pathways and the removal of trip hazards
- Small scale works to ensure that the property remains weather proof including minor repairs to doors windows and gutters
- Window fixtures and coverings
- Flooring repairs
- Storage and shelving
- Door reversals

Type and level of financial support

Measures funded by way of a grant to the value of £300.

Works may be completed by the Handyperson Service or by a Care & Repair framework contractor.

Limited to two grants on any 12 month period.

Note: Where the applicant is a tenant, any items deemed to be the responsibility of the landlord will not be grant funded and where works are deemed eligible landlords consent will be required.

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Appendix 4

Discretionary Careline Grant

viii. Careline Grant

Purpose

To help vulnerable clients to live safely and independently in their own homes by providing access to 24 hour support via the provision of a community alarm and associated equipment.

Eligibility

Available to vulnerable households where the applicant is 60 years or over (or under 60 years and suffering from long term ill health or disability) and are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits or by meeting other grant criteria listed below.

Qualifying works

Works such as, but not exclusively;

- Supply and Installation of Careline alarm unit
- Supply and installation of key safe
- Provision of an electrical socket to enable installations

Type and level of financial support

Measures funded by way of a grant through the Careline Community Service team, subject to conditions.

Maximum grant level of £300 per household, per annum inclusive of parts and labour.

Financial Eligibility for Careline Discretionary Grant:

Qualifying Benefits

- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Guaranteed Pension Credit
- Income – related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit

OR

Other qualifying criteria;

- Diagnosis of dementia or memory difficulties (regardless of financial eligibility)
- Direct referrals from health to avoid delayed transfer of care

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Appendix 5

ixi. Eligibility for Discretionary Assistance (other than Careline Grant)

The Low Level Prevention Grant and Safe & Secure Grant have a criterion of;

- Suffering from ill-health or a disability.

The below criteria relates to these grants;

- Adapt
- Relocation
- Additional Adaptation Assistance
- Emergency Repair Grant
- Home Repair Assistance

A qualifying benefit is a benefit that someone receives and this is a means tested benefit. Benefits can be changed by a delegated decision and also from time to time by relevant bodies but at the time this policy was written the relevant means tested benefits were the following:

- Housing Benefit (which must include a disability premium)
- Council Tax Support (which must include a disability premium and excluding discounts)
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (which must include a disability premium)
- Guaranteed Pension Credit
- Income – related Employment and Support Allowance (which must include a disability premium)
- Child Tax Credit (where annual income is below £15,050)
- Working Tax Credit (where annual income is below £15,050 which must include disability element)
- Universal Credit (when applicable)

Appendix 6

xi. Mandatory Means Test and Means tested Benefits

The Means Test is as defined and set out in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, The Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 and the Housing Renewal Grants (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2008 No. 1190.

A pass-porting benefit is a benefit that someone receives and this is a means tested benefit. Such benefits change from time to time but at the time this policy was written the relevant means tested benefits were the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Guarantee Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit (where annual income is below £15,050)
- Child Tax credit (where annual income is below £15,050)
- Housing Benefit

The above benefits will qualify a person automatically for a mandatory Disabled Facility Grant without the requirement for a means test (financial assessment).

Proof of these benefits will be required.

Appendix 7

xii. Conditions of financial Assistance, Land Charge, Fees, Interest on Loans

Conditions

All Grants and Loans offered under this assistance will be subject to conditions –

- All grant or loan conditions will be specified separately
- In the case of a breach of grant/loan conditions the grant/loan becomes repayable to the council.

In the case where an applicant ceases to be the owner, or it appears to the council that the applicant was not at the time of the application being approved entitled to the grant, no payment shall be made and the grant cancelled. In the case where interim payments have been paid, no further payments will be made and the council may recover and previous payments.

In all cases, the applicant will be informed of the appeal procedure against any decision. The Council may in exceptional circumstances determine not to require repayment or require a lesser amount.

Disposal

It is a condition of some assistance that it will have to be re-paid in whole or in part, if the property or part of it is disposed of, transferred or sold during the period of the grant/loan conditions. In the case of a Disabled Facility Grant and the Adapt Grant the first £5000 of the grant is not repayable and the maximum repayment is £10,000.

- Grant conditions will be entered as a local land charge
- Loan conditions will normally be recorded at Land Registry

Interest on Loans

Interest is not currently charged on Home Repair Assistance (HRA) loans or Discretionary Adaptation Assistance (DAA) loans. However, if the range of loans on offer is increased in future or the terms and conditions of the existing

loans vary it is possible that it would be appropriate to incorporate an interest charge into some of the loans.

Professional or other fees

The following fees will be classed as eligible expense when forming necessary expenditure to ensure the scheme can be completed.

- Planning and Building regulation fees
- Care & Repair Agency fees – The Care & Repair fee will be calculated based upon the requirement to administer DFG's
- Fees for the preparation of plans
- Fees for a technical survey
- Fees for the supervision of works
- The fees for professional advice for example obtaining proof of title
- Occupational Therapy fees
- Value Added Tax where applicable

Appendix 8

xiii. Temporary Projects or Initiatives: Assistive Technology

Senior Management Team have allocated a total of £100,000 to deliver an initiative to support clients with memory difficulties and/or those requiring acute care services; by providing a range of assistive technology products which can be quickly and easily installed.

The purpose of the initiative is to help vulnerable clients to live safely and independently in their own homes, whilst reducing hospital admissions and delayed transfer of care cases.

To qualify for equipment, the criteria are as follows:

A diagnosis of dementia or memory difficulties and / or a direct referral from health to avoid delayed transfer of care (regardless of financial eligibility).

Where possible, equipment will be provided on a short term loan basis and then re-allocated to ensure best use of funding.

Funding will support the purchase of equipment and delivery of the service including salary and support costs.

The types of equipment available will be flexible, based on feedback from Health and Social Care Professionals, but will include:

- Movement sensors
- Temperature sensors
- GPS tracking devices

Items may be monitored by the Herefordshire Housing Control Centre or via relatives and/or carers.

For longer term solutions, clients/patients will be referred to the Assistive Technology Team at Norfolk County Council.

Alongside this initiative, Careline Community Service will offer the option to purchase equipment, for those clients whom do not meet the eligibility.

Any project or initiative will require sign off by the Executive Director.

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