

Draft

Grants and assistance regime for disabled adaptations to housing in Harrow.

Contents

Section 1 Key Principles	Page2	
Section 2 Role of The Special Needs Housing Panel	Page2	
Section 3 Emergency Adaptations	Page3	
Section 4 Role of the Home Improvement Agency (HIA)	Page3	“
Section 5 Major Adaptations	Page4	
Section 6 Mandatory Grants Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) Emergency adaptations Enhanced Schemes	Page 6	
Land Charges on Mandatory Grants	Page8	
Section 7 Discretionary Grants 1 Relocation Assistance Grant/Re-Housing 2 Home Repair Grant 3 Home Safety Grant	Page8	
Section 8 Grant Conditions	Page 14	
Section 9 Harrow Handyperson Scheme	Page16	
Performance Timescales	Page18	

Date 26/.2/2011

Introduction

This document explains Harrow Council's approach to the delivery of its service to customers who require adaptations to their home.

Assistance with understanding this policy and translated versions are available by contacting the Adaptations team on 0208 7366016

Our staff are multi lingual and can cover the most common languages spoken in the borough but if this is not possible we will access a translation service as required.

1Key Principles

This policy is based on the private sector housing policy and the legislation which governs the implementation of major adaptations via Disabled Facilities Grants under the 'Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996'. **The aim is to provide a consistent service across all housing tenures.**

The council is committed to assisting people who are registered, or eligible for registration as a disabled person, to help them in gaining access to and from, and in and around their dwelling **to help them remain in their own home whenever it is practicable to do so.**

The applicant if aged over eighteen must have occupied the property as their only or main residence for at least 3 years prior to the date of application. This 3 year period shall not apply where the works are necessary to meet the needs of the applicant on the grounds of ill health or disability. If the adaptations are for the benefit of a child the parent or legal guardian is considered the applicant.

For grants in excess of £1,000 applicants must sign a declaration of intent to occupy the property as their sole or main residence for a period of 5 years from the certified date of completion of the works. If the undertaking is breached without a valid reason as set out in section 2 of the mandatory DFG land charges policy the council reserves the right to recover the grant, together with compound interest

The council is committed to improving people's lives by giving people more choice and control in the services they use.

Wherever possible, and to ensure that public money is properly spent the council will be **seeking to carry out the most cost-effective adaptation to the property which adequately meets an applicant's assessed needs.** Usually this means that an adaptation is carried out within the existing structure of a dwelling.

In accordance with the current legislation only one family room is necessary to meet the families needs, as such the council will consider the use of one of any additional reception rooms in a property to provide adaptations.

Where it is not possible to adapt a property or if there are likely to be excessive costs in adapting a property the council will consider offering re housing or in the case of owner occupiers a relocation grant, (see below) this would be at the discretion of the adaptations panel.

All proposed schemes must be supported by a referral from the council's Occupational Therapy team or the designated OT Contractor working on their behalf, and enquiries arising without such support will be referred back to Adult Services personalisation team to arrange an assessment.

The Occupational Therapists (OT's) work in collaboration with the housing surveyors and housing officers to decide and agree upon a scheme. **The OT must determine what is necessary and appropriate** for the disabled person to meet their eligible assessed needs and the **surveyor must consider what is reasonable and practical** given the structural, planning and other restraints. The most modest solution is recommended and the OT and surveyor are required to differentiate between the 'needs' and 'wants' of the service user.

Wherever possible if the Council is funding personal care services for the disabled applicant, adaptations should aim to reduce the ongoing revenue cost by enabling the person to attain or regain more independence in daily living. The Special Needs Housing Panel will consider this aspect before agreeing the capital allocation for the scheme.

2 The Special Needs Housing Panel

To ensure an equitable and transparent approach to decision making, value for money and the appropriateness of proposed adaptations the council has formed a panel to review emergency and larger adaptations over £15k as well as to set guidance on general adaptation principles and standards e.g. whether the property is currently suitable for occupation, whether decanting is required and whether work should be completed before occupation etc.

The panel is made up of the following senior managers:

- The Harrow Home Improvement Agency (HHIA) Team Manager
- Occupational Therapy service –Lead OT
- Housing management – Head of Asset Management and Housing Provision Manager

The panel meets on a fortnightly basis, however they can convene an extra meeting in the case of an emergency adaptation request in addition to the scheduled meetings.

Appeals against the decisions of the panel will be to the Executive Adaptations Board. The Board is made up of the following officers:

Paul Najsarek Corporate Director - Adults & Housing (Chair of panel)
Bernie Flaherty -Divisional Director, Community Care
Debi Sainsbury- Interim Head of Home Ownership
Donna Edwards -Service Manager-Directorate Finance Lead
Paul Mullins-Interim Head of Asset Management
John Edwards- Divisional Director-Environmental Services
Lynne Pennington- Divisional Director of Housing Services
Maggie Challoner- Service Manager - Resident
Sue Spurlock- Interim Head of Community Care

Appeals to the Executive Adaptations Board must be in writing within 2 weeks of the notification of the panel's decision detailing the grounds for the appeal. The Board will consider the appeal based on written representations and there is no right for applicants to make oral representations. The Board can request additional information from applicants if it feels this will be relevant to their decision-making. Decisions of the Board will be made within 4 weeks of receipt of the appeal, unless further information is required, in which case the applicant will be informed of the revised timescale for determination of the appeal.

3 Role of the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) (This is an optional service)

The Staying Put team, Harrows Home Improvement Agency offers assistance in helping an applicant through the adaptations process.

The team will design the scheme, obtain all necessary permissions, prepare a detailed schedule of works, tender the scheme through their approved list of contractors and arrange all contractual matters between the applicant and the contractor. They will also supervise the works on site, deal with any variations required, make interim and final payments and ensure all warranties and guarantees are in place on completion. This service is provided free for council tenants and for a fee for owner occupiers and private sector tenants which can be paid from the grant that residents receive.

Caseworkers will also advise on benefit entitlement and will explore/apply for alternative sources of funding for non-grant aidable services, and will assist the service user throughout the process.

4 Major adaptations

Major adaptations are available to assist a disabled person in gaining access to and from, and in and around their dwelling. They can be funded from DFG's subject to means testing (see below for further details) for council tenants they are not subject to a financial means test as they are funded through the rents received from tenants. The cost of council major adaptations is not expected to exceed the thresholds set for private sector grant funding (current maximum of £30k).

The main areas where major adaptations are considered:

1) Facilitating access and Provision

This includes adaptations to remove any barriers preventing the service user from moving freely around the property:

- Facilitating access to and from the dwelling or building in which the dwelling is situated.
- Facilitating access to the garden.
- Facilitating access to a room used or useable as the principal family room.
- Facilitating access to and from a room used or useable for sleeping or alternatively providing such a room for the disabled occupant.
- Facilitating access to a room in which there is a lavatory, a bath or shower (or both) and a wash hand basin or providing a room in which there is such a facility or facilities.
- Facilities for the preparation and cooking of food.

2) Making a dwelling or building safe

For example, minimising the risk of danger where a disabled person may have behavioural problems, which cause them to act in a boisterous or violent manner, damaging the house, themselves and perhaps other people. Examples include: an enhanced hearing system, specialised lighting, toughened or shatterproof glass, installation of guards around particular facilities e.g. fires, radiators, reinforcement of floors, walls or ceilings, or cladding or exposed surfaces and corners to prevent self injury.

3) Room usable for sleeping

Providing a room is usually only considered when it isn't possible to adapt the service users existing bedroom e.g. because of access or size constraints. Where the service user shares a bedroom with another person, funding may be given to provide a room so that the normal sleeping arrangements

can be maintained. This may be considered if a child has behavioural problems and is disturbing or disturbed by the person they share a room with.

4) Facilitate access to the principal family room

This may include widening doorways, creating wheelchair circulation space, or possibly providing lift access to the room. A family room may not be the existing family room. The principal family room can be re-designated as part of the works.

5) Bathroom

A service user should have access to a wash hand basin, WC, shower and/or bath.

6) Facilitation of preparation of food

Potential works: re-arrangement or enlargement of kitchen, modified/specially designed storage units, gas, electricity and plumbing installation etc to enable the user to be independent.

7) Improve any heating system in the dwelling or provide this if none exists

Potential works include: improvement of an existing heating system, or provision of a heating system where it is unsuitable or where there is no heating. Funding should not be given to adapt or install heating in rooms that are not normally used by the disabled person.

8) Adapt heating, lighting or power controls to make them easier to use. Works may include: relocation of power points or thermostat, provision of adapted controls, and installation of additional controls or sockets.

9) Facilitate access and movement around the dwelling to care for a person who is normally resident in the dwelling and is in need of care. This provides for works to enable a service user to access their child's bedroom or the bedroom of a parent whom they care for.

Wherever possible, and to ensure that public money is properly spent the council will be seeking to carry out the most cost-effective adaptation to the property which adequately meets an applicants needs. Except in exceptional circumstances this means that an adaptation is carried out within the existing structure of a dwelling.

Legislation is already in place to govern the provision of major adaptations for the private sector and to ensure transparency and equity across tenures; the same principles apply to council tenancies:

- Only one family room is necessary to meet the family's needs, as such the council will consider the use of one of the reception rooms in a property to provide adaptations.
- Where it is not possible to adapt a property or if there are likely to be excessive costs in adapting a property the council will consider re-housing the disabled person. The recommendation to re-house a person as an alternative to adapting the property would be at the discretion of the Special Needs Housing Panel.
- On adaptations to council property stairlifts, through floor lifts and hoists installed become the property of the council who will pay for servicing and maintenance. This may be subject to a service charge in future.
- Overcrowding is not taken in to account when determining the most appropriate scheme. Major adaptations, for example additional rooms, will not be recommended on the basis that

the property is overcrowded. Overcrowding issues will be dealt with under the council's housing policies.

6 MANDATORY GRANTS

The council must provide certain grants to residents in the borough on a compulsory or mandatory basis if conditions are met. Other grants are discretionary and are provided on the basis of how they contribute to meeting the wider strategic objectives to support residents and private sector housing in the borough.

6a Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are mandatory and carried out under the provisions of the Housing Grants, Construction & Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended) and are awarded to applicants who are registered or eligible for registration as a disabled person, to help them remain in their own home.

DFGs are available to leaseholders owner/occupiers and private sector tenants and Housing Association tenants. Whilst council tenants are eligible to apply for a DFG, the Council funds adaptations to its own properties from the housing revenue account. The application process for council tenants is dealt with in the same way to ensure they are treated fairly.

The proposed scheme must be supported by a referral from the council's Occupational Therapy team or the designated OT Contractor.

Mandatory DFGs are available to assist a disabled person in gaining access to and from, and in and around their dwelling. They are subject to a Test of Financial Resources (which is strictly controlled by Government legislation), and are limited to a maximum amount, imposed by Central Government. The limit changes from time to time and is currently £30,000 per application. Subject to all other qualifying criteria being met, the council *must* approve a mandatory DFG.

Where the costs of an adaptation scheme exceed these financial limits, the council may award additional funds at the discretion of the Special Needs Housing panel (see section 7).

Stairlifts, through floor lifts and hoists installed under a Disabled Facilities Grant become the property of the grant applicant and, as such, it is the applicant's responsibility to pay for servicing and maintenance, although the council includes within the cost of a Disabled Facilities Grant, a five-year servicing and maintenance contract for these items. Thereafter, the council recommends that equipment is serviced at intervals prescribed by the manufacturer and there are a number of private companies able to undertake this work although the installer of the equipment is usually also able to make such arrangements.

6b) Housing Association Tenants

Housing association tenants can apply for a disabled facilities grant, however the council would expect the RSL to make a contribution towards the cost of the adaptation, this will be negotiated on a case by case basis and approved by the Special Needs Housing panel.

6c) Enhanced Schemes

The council understands that sometimes a service user may wish to have a scheme designed which goes over and above the approved eligible scheme (i.e. the scheme recommended by the

adaptations surveyor and occupational therapist), the council may allow this however in practice this can be quite complicated. Please see the procedure detailed below:

1. The council will provide the applicant with the amount of allocation (either grant or council funding for Harrow tenants) they may receive for the eligible scheme; this is based on standard prices for similar schemes the council has approved in the past.
2. The applicant will need to appoint their own architect to design the full scheme including the eligible elements. The council will allow an amount for payment of the architect. This amount will be equal to 5% of the eligible schemes value if it is for design only, or 8% of the eligible schemes value if it is for the design and supervision of the works.
3. The design must incorporate all of the Occupational Therapists specification, and any additional works proposed must not impinge on these specifications.
4. Once confirmation has been received that the scheme meets the needs of the applicant, the proposed scheme must be submitted for planning and building control approval, and a detailed specification must be prepared for pricing purposes.
5. The client's architect/surveyor should send the drawing and specification to a minimum of two contractors for pricing.
6. Once the appropriate planning and building control approvals and priced specifications are received by the council, they will be subject to the necessary checks by the grants department and the grant will be calculated taking into account any assessed contribution and approval notification issued .
7. Once the approval is received by the applicant's works may commence on site.

Delays in making the application may affect entitlement to a grant, with this in mind the council would expect to be in receipt of a valid application within 6 months of the original grant surveyor's visit. If not received by that deadline and no valid reason is provided the application will be cancelled and a new application will need to be made by the client or their surveyor/architect.

6d) Land Charges on Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants

Where, in the councils adaptations panels view an adaptation given under a mandatory disabled facilities grant adds tangible value to a dwelling, then a 10 year charge will be placed on the property if:

1. The applicant is the owner or joint owner of the premises on which the works were carried out.
2. The grant awarded is more than £5000.00.

The council may reclaim part of the grant, which exceeds £5000 (but may not demand an amount in excess of £10,000).

The council has the discretion as to whether or not to place a land charge on the property, or reclaim any or all of the grant paid, but it will consider the following:-

- a) the extent to which the recipient would suffer financial hardship if the grant was reclaimed;
- b) Whether the disposal of the property was to enable the recipient to take up employment, or change the location of their employment;
- c) Whether the disposal of the property is made for reasons of the recipient's physical or mental health or well being, or;
- d) Whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient to live with, or near any person who will provide care for the recipient by reason of their disability.

6e Emergency Adaptations

The council can allow at its discretion, in certain cases, an emergency adaptation. This will only be used in urgent cases for clients who for example:

- Cannot sustain living, or life, at home unless essential adaptations are undertaken.
- Cannot access essential hospital appointments, dialysis or day care without adaptations.
- The current situation is placing the service user and their carers at considerable risk of injury e.g. from unsafe moving and handling

The type of works that could be funded are:

- Stair lifts for access to the property
- Stair lifts where living on the ground floor is not possible.
- Ramping
- Other works which in the opinion of an OT would facilitate hospital discharges or are needed urgently

For adaptations funded via the scheme, the normal adaptation process will be bypassed in order to install the adaptations as speedily and efficiently as possible. However, the means test will still apply as with mandatory DFG for owner-occupiers or private sector tenants. As well as providing emergency adaptations this process will considerably reduce the time spent by Local Authority officers processing full applications. There will also be funding available to RSL tenants to be used in the same circumstances, however the RSL will process their own applications.

Processing emergency adaptations

- 1) Emergency referral to the HART team from the Occupational Therapist (OT) and confirmation that the client is in receipt of a passport benefit.
- 2) HART ensures the client signs a 'consent form' confirming they own the Property or in the case of private tenants that the landlord agrees to the adaptations. HART must also obtain proof of a passport benefit.
- 3) The works will be ordered and overseen by HART in consultation with the OT.
- 4) If the OT assesses a service user who meets the criteria for urgent adaptations, they will refer the case to the next scheduled Special Needs Housing Panel for discussion and approval. 5) The OT and/or surveyor must present this case at the special needs housing panel for approval, and with the support of the OT Team Manager, before proceeding.

The upper limit for works under this scheme will be £5K. Clients must either prove ownership or be prepared to sign a declaration of ownership in order to allow works to proceed.

2 Relocation Assistance Grant/Re-Housing

Undertaking major adaptations may not always be recommended. Re-housing or re-locating the disabled person will be the preferred option in some circumstances:

- Where the existing property is not suitable for adaptation within the available resources to meet long term needs or
- Where it is not economically viable to do so.

Re-housing for council tenants or a re-location grant for owners or private tenants will be considered to address the housing needs of the whole household.

The Special Needs Housing Panel determines the decision of whether this option will be considered. The disabled person and/or their advocate will be asked to consider re-housing by the Special Needs Housing Panel.

An accessible housing register is being developed to facilitate moves across the region. If a tenant agrees to being re-housed their housing transfer application will be assessed in line with the council's Allocation Policy, which will take into consideration the effect their current accommodation, is having on their housing needs and health.

The disabled person and tenant can decline to move property and continue to pursue their mandatory DFG application. In cases of tenant applications, the landlord's consent will be required for adaptations to be carried out. The Council in its capacity as landlord will only withhold its consent where it is reasonable to do so. Circumstances where it may be reasonable to withhold consent include the following:

1. Where suitable alternative accommodation is or will become available within 6 months in an area where the disabled person's support needs can be fulfilled. Suitable alternative accommodation could include accommodation that can be adapted to meet the tenant's needs within 12/18 months;
2. Where a tenant has submitted a Right to Buy application;
3. Where a tenant is awaiting a transfer to alternative accommodation;
4. Where a tenant is not a secure tenant eg. Service occupancy, temporarily accommodated under homeless legislation;

If landlord consent is withheld, the Occupational Therapist will ensure all risks are reduced to the lowest possible level and their request for major adaptations will be cancelled. Minor emergency works will still be available if deemed necessary and appropriate.

The relevant 'Moving Costs' that the re-location grant covers includes:

Owners and Leaseholders:

- Estate agent fees
- Conveyance costs
- Stamp duty
- Mortgage cancellation fees if arranged more than 12 months prior to application)
- Surveyor costs
- Home Energy Certificates

Owners and council tenants:

- Removal costs including the disconnection and reconnection of appliances and aerials etc. For council tenants the council will normally make such arrangements via their own contractors.
- Any essential items needed for moving e.g. carpets, curtains where existing will not fit new property.

RSL Tenants

- We will negotiate with the RSL to establish a cost effective solution.

The OT and surveyor will view any prospective properties and identify whether they require any adaptations and whether these need to be done before the disabled person moves in or whether they can be done once they have moved.

Any adaptation work, which is required to the prospective property, must be brought back to the Special Needs Housing Panel to be agreed. In most cases the costs relating to the work and the relocation must be less than the cost of adapting their existing accommodation, however, consideration will also be given to the best long term use of the council's housing stock.

A DFG of up to £15k may also be awarded for adaptations to the property to which you relocate.

Conditions:

- **The relocation costs and any required adaptation to the new property will count as one application up to the £30k limit**
- This assistance is subject to the Council's test of the applicant's financial resources, which will be the same as the test applied for DFG eligibility.
- The grant will only be offered if there are no alternative sources of funding available.
- Inspections of the existing and prospective properties by a grants surveyor and occupational therapist must be carried out before a relocation grant is agreed. In the case where the applicant moves outside of the borough, a paper check may be undertaken rather than a surveyor's visit.

Awarding the Grant

Applicants will not be automatically awarded the full grant. The Relocation Grant will be considered based on fee estimates submitted up to a maximum of £15,000 to cover 'Moving Costs'.

The applicant is not restricted to the area of the relocation, however it may affect the level of assistance the applicant is eligible for (as below).

- If the disabled person moves out of the Borough of Harrow s/he will only be eligible for a grant to cover the 'moving costs' and not towards adapting the new property.
- If the applicant is relocated within the Borough of Harrow the disabled occupant will be considered for further grant to cover adaptation costs for the new property. This is subject to a surveyors visit and determined by the Special Needs Housing Panel.
- The total grant payable including relocation 'moving costs' and adaptations to the new property must not exceed the mandatory DFG grant or the cost of the original proposed scheme, whichever is lower.

7 DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

Please note mandatory grants will be the first priority for all available funding.

The following facilities may be offered to support the council's commitment to improve people's lives by giving people more choice and control in the services they use. The priority order subject to available resources is :

1. Discretionary Disabled facilities grants to supplement £30k mandatory grant limit
- 2 Home Repair Grant
- 3 Home Safety Grant
- 4 Empty Property Grants see separate leaflet

1 Discretionary Disabled facilities grants to supplement £30k mandatory grant limit

Where the costs of an adaptation scheme exceed the £30k statutory financial limits, the Council may in exceptional circumstances award additional funds at the discretion of the Special Needs Housing panel. Any monies paid above the mandatory limit are subject to an interest-free charge on the property for owner-occupier applicants and become repayable, in full to the Council in the event of a change of ownership or breach of occupation conditions.

2 Home Repair Grant

Home Repair Grants aim to cover the cost of minor repairs that present a serious health and safety risk to owner/occupiers on a low income. Eligible works are any item of disrepair that causes a serious health and safety risk. These grants also cover urgent repairs to specialist equipment installed under disabled facilities grants that are no longer covered by a warranty.

Grant assistance will be paid towards the cost of eligible works, on completion of the works. There is no limit to the number of grant applications that can be made but a total limit of £5,000 per dwelling over a three-year period applies.

In exceptional circumstances a larger grant of maximum £20,000 will be considered for cases of vulnerable adults referred by Adult Services, where larger repairs were deemed necessary to safeguard occupants or the general public. These grants are subject to available funding and at the

discretion of the council after all other avenues of funding have been exhausted. In these cases the costs remain as a permanent charge on the property.

Qualification for the Home Repair Grants is based on the following criteria:

Eligible applicants:

All applicants must be in receipt of a means tested benefit and with no other non-vulnerable adults living in the household. This condition does not apply to an application in respect of works where a Disabled Facilities Grant has been approved and the repair works are necessary to carry out the DFG.

All applicants must be either:

Owner/occupiers of the property concerned. Note all joint owners must be in receipt of a means tested benefit.

Leaseholders, with a responsibility to undertake such works as a condition of their lease. Note all joint leaseholders must be in receipt of a means tested benefit.

In the event of the demand for assistance exceeding available funding, a waiting list will be operated, subject to the following priority rating. Group 1 being the highest priority and 3 the lowest:

Group 1 Applicants who have previously received DFG with an item of specialist equipment that is in need of repair.

Group 2 Over 60 years of age or registered/registerable as disabled and vulnerable adults referred by Adult Services

Group 3 Over 18 years of age with a child in the household of under 16

Each case within each group will be processed in chronological order with respect to the date of enquiry.

Applicants will need to provide evidence of receipt of benefit.

Eligible work:

General housing repairs (not including items of decoration) such as roof leaks, electrical faults, gas pipe work defects or repair of defective fixtures and fittings such as central heating boilers/systems and other repairs likely to have serious effects on the occupier's health or safety.

3 Home Safety Grant

This grant is available where the applicant, or the applicant's spouse or partner, is aged 60 years or over who are on a means tested benefit, or people identified as at risk or are clients referred from the councils Safeguarding Adults Team, Domestic Violence Unit or the Metropolitan Police Crime Reduction Unit regardless of age.

The total value of grant assistance that may be given in respect of any one application is £500.00

No further application for a Home Safety Grant will be eligible during a period of 5 years from the certified date of completion of the relevant works except where the client is referred from the councils Domestic Violence Unit or Crime Reduction Unit.

All applicants must be in receipt of a means tested benefit.

- The applicant for grant must certify that he or she has the power or duty to carry out the necessary works.
- The applicant must have been resident for a minimum period of residence of one year unless the referral is via the Councils Safeguarding Adults Team, Domestic Violence Unit or Crime Reduction Unit where there is no minimum residence.
- there is no repayment of grant required on sale of the dwelling.
- there is no certificate of future occupancy required in respect of owners or tenants.
- a minimum of one estimate is to be submitted from the appointed building contractor. This estimate must clearly show the contractor's name, address and telephone number. The estimate must be signed and dated by the contractor or someone authorised to do so on behalf of the Company. If the estimate submitted is considered unreasonable on any grounds by the council a second estimate will be required.
- final payment of grant monies will be made following an inspection of the dwelling and on receipt of the applicant's declaration of satisfactory completion of the relevant works. This declaration will also show the names of the contractor who carried out the work, date of estimate and the actual cost incurred.
- the applicant for grant must give prior written agreement to the works proposed.
- payment of grant will be subject to receipt of a satisfactory contractor's invoice or demand for payment.
- No grant can be paid in respect of works started or completed before the Council has given a Notice of Grant Approval.

Eligible Works

The grant is available for the following works:

- Works of an emergency nature, or, requiring immediate attention, or, that are in the opinion of the grant officer, affecting the health and safety of the occupants i.e. smoke alarms, sound alarms, safety catches, security locks, bolts, chains etc.
- Works to implement recommendations made on referral from the councils Domestic Violence Unit or Crime Reduction Unit
- Works specified in the referral from the councils Safeguarding Adults Team, Domestic Violence Unit or Crime Reduction Unit.

8 TEST OF RESOURCES

Mandatory DFGs are subject to a Test of Financial Resources (which is strictly controlled by Government legislation), and are limited to a maximum amount, imposed by Central Government. The limit changes from time to time and is currently £30,000 per application. Subject to all other qualifying criteria being met, the council *must* approve a mandatory DFG.

Occupational Therapists send a Preliminary Test of Resources (PTOR) to clients (see appendix 1). When this is received by the HART team they carry out the means test .

If applicants are in receipt of Guaranteed pension credit, Income Support, Income based job seekers allowance, Council tax benefit (not single supplement) Housing benefit, Working tax credit (with an income below £15,050) and Children's tax credit (with an income below £15,050) and can provide confirmation of their benefit they will not be means tested.

If they are not in receipt of any of these benefits, they and their partner will need to be means tested. In order for us to carryout the means test they will be asked to provide the following information:

- Copies of State pension and any private or Occupational pensions to cover the last 3 month period.
- Copies of Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance or any other benefit awards to cover the current period.
- Copies of all bank & building society accounts to cover the last 3 month period.
- Copies of payslips for the last 3 months.
- Copies of certificates for all stocks, shares and premium bonds held by you.
- Copies of any other investments or relevant information relating to your finances.

The required documents are collected by the caseworkers at the application stage.

New clients should call Reablement team for an assessment on 020 8901 2680

9 GRANTS GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Interim payments will not be made unless the services of more than one contractor are involved in the works, or circumstances arise which could result in excessive delays in payment for works that have already been satisfactorily completed.

The applicant must have occupied the subject property as their only or main residence for at least 3 years prior to the date of application. This 3 year period shall not apply where the works are necessary to meet the needs of the applicant on the grounds of ill health or disability.

For grants in excess of £1,000 applicants must sign a declaration of intent to occupy the property as their sole or main residence for a period of 5 years from the certified date of completion of the works. If the undertaking is breached without a valid reason as set out in section 2 of the mandatory DFG

land charges policy. The council reserves the right to recover the grant, together with compound interest.

If/when a person gets an insurance or compensation payout eg. As a result of car accident, it is the councils intention to pursue repayment of the grant.

*For further information please refer to the **Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration act 1996 part 1 Chapter 1 51.***

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/53/section/51>

Assistance will not be given if:

The works for which financial assistance is sought have already started, unless prior permission has been given at the discretion of the Grants team manager.

The applicant or a member of their family carries out the work, however grant aid may be given for materials only.

All electrical works are to be carried out by a contractor registered to self certify the installation with Building Control as compliant with Part P of the Building Regulations on completion e.g. NICEIC domestic installer. Works should also be covered by appropriate completion certificate.

All gas related works are to be carried out by a GAS SAFE registered fitter licensed to carry out the work and covered by the appropriate certificates on completion. All new gas boilers to be installed by company registered to self certify the installation with Building Control.

All replacement windows must be certified as complying by Building Control, or covered by a certificate from an installer registered to self certify the job with building control e.g. FENSA registered.

Unforeseen works arising during the course of the work will not be eligible for assistance unless permission is obtained from the grant surveyor dealing with the application prior to such works being carried out. Any costs exceeding the grant maximum under these circumstances will be the responsibility of the grant applicant.

Where applicable, all works must have the relevant Building Control and/or Planning Permission.

All works must be completed to a satisfactory standard within 12 months of approval of the grant.

Final payments will only be released on satisfactory completion of all of the work. Building Control clearance and evidence of self-certification for building regulations compliance must be obtained if appropriate before payment can be made.

9 HARROW HANDYPERSON SCHEME

Harrow Handyman Scheme is a free service aimed at homeowners or persons in rented/leased accommodation with responsibility for the upkeep of their living area living in Harrow, who are without regular help and support from family and friends and unable to carry out the work themselves.

To qualify for assistance under the scheme, the applicant must be:

A home owner, or a person in rented/leased accommodation with responsibility for the upkeep of their living area under their tenancy/lease agreement, and;

Over 60 or disabled and in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- income support
- housing/council tax benefit
- income based JSA
- family credit
- disability living Allowance
- guaranteed pension credit
- invalidity benefit/Attendance Allowance

All advice given, including the initial visit to assess the work by our supervisor, is free. All the client pays for is the materials – the labour is free.

The works carried out under the scheme include:

Basic Plumbing:

- unblocking sinks
- Replacing tap washers
- Repairing WC cisterns
- unblocking gutters
(low height only)

Basic Carpentry:

- fixing loose
floorboards
- un-sticking windows
- putting up shelves or
cupboards
- fixing gates
- fixing curtain rails

Basic Electrics:

- replacing light bulbs
- replacing fuses
- fitting a new plug
- fixing a battery
operated doorbell

Home Security:

- changing locks
- installing battery
operated smoke
alarms

Other Small Jobs:

- patch up painting
and decorating
- turning a mattress
- basic glazing
- re-siting furniture
- removing rubbish
- easing a door
- putting in safety
appliances

The scheme is limited to a maximum of 6 hours work per year, with the 6 hours spread out over a maximum of 4 visits per year.

Performance and Timescales

Our current performance for the processing of DFG's and major adaptations is x weeks. We are aiming to reduce this down to an average of 35 weeks by 2012.

All applicants will be kept informed of the progress of their application by letters on receipt of the initial application, following initial assessment and final approval. If a service user decides to use the HIA they will have an allocated caseworker and surveyor who will also keep them informed on the progress of the application.

Housing Grants C & R Act 1996

MANDATORY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT ENQUIRY

Thank you for your recent enquiry concerning grant assistance. I would be grateful if you would now provide me with the information on the enclosed form. It should however be clearly understood that a preliminary assessment does not constitute an application for grant. **If you do not return this assessment your application for grant cannot proceed.** The relevant grant application forms and other explanatory details will be sent to you when your name comes to the top of the waiting list. For enquiries please see contact details at the bottom of the page.

This form should be returned to:-

Manager HART
P O Box 39, Civic 1, Station Road, Harrow, HA1 2XF

Occupational Therapist Name: _____ Date: _____

Client Address: _____

Client Contact Number: _____

Alternative Name & Contact: _____

1. Please state the **full names** and **telephone numbers** of the **owners** of the dwelling and (where applicable) anyone holding a joint ownership.

2. Please state the **full names** and **dates of birth** for you, your partner and any other persons (including children), living at the property.

Please ensure **all** questions on this page have been completed.

Preliminary Financial Assessment

The information required overleaf relates only to the **disabled person and any spouse or partner** of the disabled person.

Disabled Person and Spouse or Partners Details

3. Name and national insurance number of any disabled person.

Name of disabled person: _____

National insurance number of disabled person: _____

4. Are you or your partner in receipt of any of the following:

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Income support | <input type="checkbox"/> | A Joint-claim jobseeker's allowance | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Guaranteed pension credit | <input type="checkbox"/> | Housing Benefit | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Income-based jobseeker's allowance | <input type="checkbox"/> | Council Tax Benefit (not including single or Disability supplement) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

It may be possible for the Council to process the application more quickly if those in such receipt give permission for your local Department of Social Security office to confirm this fact. To give permission, please complete the authorisation below.

I authorise the Department of Social Security to confirm on request by the Council that I now receive income support/guaranteed pension credit/an income-based jobseeker's allowance/Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit .

Name.....

DSS reference number (case paper), if known

Signature..... Date:

Please proceed to page 4, sign & date it.

If you are not in receipt of any of the benefits mentioned above, please continue.

5. Please state the amount of income you or your partner have received for paid employment, after any deductions for tax, national insurance & pension contributions (net pay) for the last 3 months or any other income & benefits you & your partner receive.

Disabled person				Partner		
Net Pay	Amount (£)	Weekly or Monthly	Number of hours worked	Amount (£)	Weekly or Monthly	Number of hours worked
Period 1						
Period 2						
Period 3						

Please ensure all relevant questions on this page have been completed.

Note: If you are self employed, please provide the most recent audited Profit & Loss account.

Disabled Person			Partner	
Any other Income	Amount (£)	Weekly or Monthly	Amount (£)	Weekly or Monthly
State Pension (excl. Attendance Allow)				
Occupational Pension				
Other				

Disabled person			Partner	
Benefits	Amount (£)	Weekly or Monthly	Amount (£)	Weekly or Monthly
Child benefit				
Incapacity benefit				
Attendance allowance				
Disability Living allowance				
• Care - High				
- Middle				
- Low				
• Mobility - High				
- Low				
Child Tax credit				
Working Tax credit				
Other				

6. If you live alone or if both you and your partner are disabled.

Does anyone receive Invalid Care Allowance for looking after you YES/NO

7. Do you own any other property in addition to the house you are presently living?

YES/NO

If yes, please provide an estimate of the value of the property.

8. Please provide the latest balances of all the bank or building society accounts presently held by you and your partner.

Name of Bank/Building Society	Disabled Person Amount (£)	Partner Amount (£)

Please ensure all relevant questions on this page have been completed.

9. Details of all other investments held by you and your partner including premium bonds, saving certificates, shares, ISA's, Pep's etc.

Investments	Disabled Person Amount (£)	Partner Amount (£)

Shares held by Disabled person

Company/Bank	Number held

Partner

Company/Bank	Number held

Note: Please give details of any other accounts or savings that you have not Mentioned above.

10. Are you a Lone Parent? YES/NO

If yes please give the date on which you became a lone Parent]

11. Child Care Charges

If you are a single parent and work more than 16 hours per week, or if you have a partner and you are both in full time employment – please state the amount of fees paid in respect of a registered child minder or other registered child care provider e.g., nursery school.

Declaration

I declare that to the best of my knowledge the information provided on this form is accurate and that I am liable to prosecution if I have provided false information.

Relevant person’s (disabled person) signature Date:

Applicant’s Signature (Owner):..... Date:.....

This form must be returned within 28 days. If it is not returned in that time your application will be cancelled. (If you do not have the information requested contact the HART team on 020 8736 6015).

Please ensure all relevant questions on this page have been completed.

PRELIMINARY ENQUIRY AND ETHNIC MONITORING SURVEY

Harrow Council is committed to providing the best possible range of services to its residents, and also to ensure that the services are equally accessible to all ethnic groups within the Borough.

Following your recent enquiry, we would be grateful if you could complete the questionnaire below by ticking the appropriate category. You are under no obligation to answer these questions.

The information collected regarding ethnic origin allows us to monitor our services and will not be used for any other purpose, or passed on to anyone else.

Please tick the category that best describes your ethnic origin.

White:

- British _____ (01)
- Irish _____ (02)
- Other White _____ (03) (please specify).....

Mixed:

- White and Black Caribbean _____ (04)
- White and Black African _____ (05)
- White and Asian _____ (06)
- Other Mixed _____ (07) (please specify).....

Asian or Asian British:

- Indian _____ (08)
- Pakistani _____ (09)
- Bangladeshi _____ (10)
- Other Asian _____ (11)

Black or Black British:

- Caribbean _____ (12)
- African _____ (13)
- Other Black _____ (14)

Chinese or other ethnic group:

- Chinese _____ (15)
- Other ethnic group _____ (16) (please specify).....

Gender

Female

Male

Do you have a disability Yes No

Thank you for your co-operation

PLEASE RETURN TO:
HART, Harrow Council
P O Box 39, Civic 1, Station Road, Harrow, HA1 2XF

Amended: 01/07/2010