

Ashfield District Council  
Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy

1. Introduction

The Council has both statutory duties and discretionary powers to provide financial assistance to improve private sector housing conditions in the district.

This policy meets the requirements of the Regulatory Reform Housing Assistance (England and Wales) Order 2002 to publish information on the assistance available to improve private sector housing conditions.

This policy supports the Council's housing vision to: "ensure the population of Ashfield are living in or can access homes that are affordable, warm and within a safe community that promotes the health and wellbeing of residents"

This policy also supports the delivery of the objectives contained in the Housing Strategy 2016-20 and the forthcoming Private Sector Renewal Strategy. The latter has identified the households worst affected by poor housing conditions and this policy seeks to target those most in need. This means that this policy focuses mainly on assisting owner occupied households. Conditions in the private rented sector are addressed through advice and enforcement by the Private Sector Enforcement Team.

The objectives of this policy are:

- To provide adaptations to assist disabled owner occupiers to live independently
- To provide warm homes for those living with long term health conditions exacerbated by living in a cold home
- Target assistance to those most in need
- To enable older residents to continue living independently at home and feel safe

2. Scope

This policy applies to private sector residents in Ashfield. It does not apply to the Council's social housing tenants.

The assistance offered through this policy is funded through the Better Care Fund, which is awarded by central government each year and subdivided at a County level. Applications for assistance under this policy will be considered on a first come first served basis and administered under local policies. Once the funding is exhausted, no further applications will be accepted until further funding

becomes available.

### 3. Providing Adaptations for Disabled Persons:

The provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) is mandatory under the provisions of Section 23 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

A DFG is a grant to help meet the cost of adapting a property where a disabled<sup>1</sup> adult or child lives so that it meets their needs and they can continue living there independently. Adaptations available through the DGF scheme include stair lifts, wet rooms, level access showers, ramps to main entrance doors.

The assessment of need is carried out by Occupational Therapy Service at Nottinghamshire County Council and then referred to Ashfield District Council for the adaptations to be carried out. Ashfield District Council will assess whether the work is reasonable and practicable to be carried out having regard to the age and condition of the property. Ashfield District Council will then administer the grants

The maximum amount of mandatory DFG, at the time of writing this policy is £30,000. The Council may also provide an additional maximum discretionary top-up amount of £10,000, (including any ancillary charges) where circumstances are such that the cost of work exceed £30,000. For schemes costing over £40,000, the applicant may apply to Nottinghamshire County Council for top-up assistance to make up the difference in costs prior to approval or utilise their own funds. The Council will cover the costs of any genuinely unforeseen/extra works post approval.

All applications regarding disabled adults are means tested. Applications regarding disabled children under the age of 19 are exempt from means testing.

In line with the Act a land charge will be placed on the adapted owner occupied properties which will remain in place for 10 years from the certified date. The charge will be recovered where the property is sold or otherwise disposed of within 10 years of the grant works being completed. Charges are placed for grants over £5,000 up to a maximum limit of £10,000.

If the grant is subject to repayment conditions then the Council will take the following into account when asking for repayment:

- 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 wellbeing, or;

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<sup>1</sup> A definition of a disabled person is given in Section 100 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

- 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.

Having considered all of these factors the Council must be satisfied that repayment is reasonable in the circumstances.

The land charge period will be a maximum of 10 years from the date certified by the Council as being the date on which all eligible works are completed to the satisfaction of the Council.

#### 4. Affordable Warmth and Preventative Grants:

It is well established that the condition of a person's home can have a negative impact on their health. For many households the most effective solution to a housing problem may not be a move to alternative accommodation, but instead being able to access help to maintain their home to a decent standard, or in some circumstances, to adapt their home to meet their specific requirements. By improving, adapting and maintaining homes the likelihood of an occupant becoming ill from poor housing conditions is reduced, this in turn helps to reduce the number of people admitted to hospital.

Three of the most common hazards found in homes are:

- Excess cold
- Falls
- Damp and mould

Grants are available to owner occupiers within the Ashfield district to help create safer and healthier homes by targeting these specific areas in the form of affordable warmth and preventative grants.

A maximum grant of £10,000 is available to cover adaptations in the home including works such as:

- Boiler and heating system replacements (where existing systems are not functional)
- Boiler and heating system installations (where there is no current central heating system installed)
- Boiler repairs
- New heating controls
- Insulation
- Replacement doors and windows (where the existing are wooden, aluminium or single glazed)
- Providing wet rooms
- Access/Egress to the property

For the purpose of the affordable warmth grant the applicant must be able to prove that they have a qualifying health condition, including the following:

- Atrial fibrillation/heart flutter
- Angina/coronary heart disease
- Heart Failure
- Peripheral arterial disease (PAD)
- Hypertension/high blood pressure
- Osteoporosis/brittle bones
- Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA)/mini stroke
- Asthma
- COPD
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Diabetes
- Cancer

Assistance will only be offered once an assessment of the property has been carried out by the Council. Private rented properties will not be eligible for Affordable Warmth assistance for physical improvement of the property however assistance can be offered in the form of energy advice, tariff switching, benefit maximisation, heating controls.

Assistance will be subject to a means test, the mandatory DFG means test will be used to determine any contribution.

The provision of assistance will be subject to a land charge being placed on the adapted property which will remain in place for 10 years from the certified date. The charge will be recovered where the property is sold or otherwise disposed of within 10 years of the grant works being completed. Charges are placed for grants over £5,000 up to a maximum limit of £10,000.

## 5. Handyperson Adaptation Service

Nottinghamshire County Council delivers a Handyperson Adaptation Service (HPAS) across the county that helps people be safe and secure in their homes through minor adaptations and small practical jobs.

The adaptations service provides and installs up to £1,000 worth of adaptations in a single job, including items such as: grab rails, hand rails, half steps, lever taps, key safes, etc. Standard jobs will be completed within 5 working days.

There is a priority service available to anyone requiring the service to enable them to be discharged from hospital. Hospital discharge jobs will be completed within 1 – 2 working days.

The handyperson service can complete small jobs to contribute to enable someone to continue living independently at home (see appendix for full list), such as fixing loose carpets to prevent a fall. There is a £15 charge for this service, plus the cost of the materials used.

The service is open to anyone living in the private sector in Nottinghamshire aged 60 or older, or any adult with a disability. This service can be accessed by contacting Nottinghamshire County Council.

## 6. Assistive Technology

Assistive technology is equipment that individuals can use to help them live safely and independently in their own home, including sensors that are monitored 24/7 by a support centre associated with the Council. Equipment available to all Ashfield residents includes:

- Fall detector
- Smoke/heat detector
- Flood detector
- Bogus caller/panic alarm
- Property exist sensor
- Bed occupancy sensor

Equipment is provided free of charge following a needs assessment and the monitoring service provided by the support centre is free of charge for the first 3 months.

This service is provided by the Housing Team.

## 7. Appeals about Decisions in Individual Cases

Appeals against the refusal of assistance will be considered in the first instance by the DFG Project Manager. All appeals must be in writing and sent to Ashfield District Council, Urban Road, Kirkby in Ashfield, Nottingham, NG17 8DA. This submission must be clear as to the reasons for the appeal.

Appeals will only be considered on the following grounds:

- That the strategy has not been applied correctly, for example there has been a mistake in the application of the strategy to the specific case,
- That the case in question is somehow exceptional in a way that justifies an exception to the general strategy.

Appeals will not be considered on the grounds that the person disagrees with the strategy. However any written comments and complaints about the strategy will be considered.

## 8. Monitoring and review

This policy will be review in 3 years or sooner if there is a significant change in legislation or funding

## Service Summary

<b>Assistance</b>	<b><u>DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT (DFG)</u></b> <b><u>Mandatory assistance</u></b>
<b>Purpose</b>	A DFG is a grant to help meet the cost of adapting a property where a disabled adult or child lives so that it meets their needs and they can continue living there independently.
<b>Eligibility</b>	<p>To be eligible for a DFG the work that is required must be necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled occupant. This is assessed and determined by an Occupational Therapist and then referred to the Council.</p> <p>The Council also has to be satisfied that the relevant work is reasonable and practicable to carry out having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling.</p>
<b>Eligible Work</b>	<p>The work that can be carried out is work to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Facilitate access in and around the dwelling including access to the garden</li> <li>▪ Facilitate access to a room useable for sleeping</li> <li>▪ Facilitate access to a bathroom</li> <li>▪ Facilitate the preparation and cooking of food</li> <li>▪ Improving the heating system to meet the need of the disabled occupant</li> <li>▪ Facilitate the use of a source of power, light or heating</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Arrangements</b>	<p>The maximum mandatory grant is £30,000. The Council will provide a discretionary top-up of up to £10,000 where the cost of works exceed £30,000 (including any ancillary charges such as architect costs). For schemes costing over £40,000, the applicant may apply to Nottinghamshire County Council for top-up assistance to make up the difference in costs prior to approval. The Council will cover the costs of any agreed unforeseen works post approval.</p> <p>Except for where the grant is for the benefit of a child or young person, the applicant will be means tested and therefore the amount of grant may be less than the cost of work. The contribution must be paid to the Council's holding account by the client before any work can commence. This will then be paid direct to the contractor upon satisfactory completion of work.</p>
<b>Application</b>	Application for assistance is made using a DFG application form obtainable from the DFG Team, Ashfield District Council.

<b>Payment</b>	Payment is made directly to the contractor on satisfactory completion of the work. Applicants who have to contribute towards the cost of work will be expected to pay this into the Council's holding account before works proceed and will be paid direct to the contractor upon completion.
<b>Conditions</b>	<p>There is a five year grant condition period during which the owner must have an owner's interest in the dwelling and intend to live within the dwelling as their only or main residence.</p> <p>If the applicant receives compensation (related to the cause of the disability) which includes an allowance towards disabled adaptations following the completion of the work, the grant is repayable.</p> <p>A land charge will be placed on adapted owner occupied properties which will be recovered where the property is sold or otherwise disposed of within 10 years of the grant works being completed and where the cost of the DFG exceeds £5,000. The limit of the maximum charge is set by Government and is currently £10,000.</p>

<b>Assistance</b>	<b><u>AFFORDABLE WARMTH AND PREVENTATIVE GRANTS</u></b> <b><u>Discretionary Assistance</u></b>
<b>Purpose</b>	To make properties safer and improving the energy efficiency which in turn will lead to a reduction and carbon emissions and reduce fuel poverty for those living with long term health conditions exacerbated by living in a cold home, therefore improving health and wellbeing.
<b>Eligibility</b>	<p>Affordable warmth grants are available to owner occupiers only with certain long term health conditions exacerbated by the cold. For the purposes of the programme, the eligible health conditions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atrial fibrillation/heart flutter</li> <li>• Angina/coronary heart disease</li> <li>• Heart Failure</li> <li>• Peripheral arterial disease (PAD)</li> <li>• Hypertension/high blood pressure</li> <li>• Osteoporosis/brittle bones</li> <li>• Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA)/mini stroke</li> <li>• Asthma</li> <li>• COPD</li> <li>• Rheumatoid arthritis</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cancer</li> </ul> <p>Applicants must be able to provide suitable evidence of their condition, such as a GP letter or repeat prescriptions.</p> <p>Both Affordable Warmth and Preventative grants will require the applicant to have lived in the property as their main residence for a minimum of 1 year prior to application.</p>
<b>Eligible Work</b>	<p>Works will be determined by the Council following an assessment of the home. A schedule of works will be drawn up by the Council and agreed by the service user before the grant is formally approved.</p> <p>Works to habitable areas of the property can be included only and any works relating to sheds, outbuildings, conservatories and gardens for example will be excluded from eligible work.</p>
<b>Financial Arrangements</b>	<p>A grant is available up to a maximum of £10,000 (including VAT and a contingency sum). Assistance will be offered subject to the availability of resources at the time of application.</p>
<b>Application</b>	<p>Applications are made to the DFG Team at Ashfield District Council.</p>
<b>Payment</b>	<p>Payment is made direct to the applicant's contractor on satisfactory completion of the works and production of invoices/certificates. Any assessed client contribution will need to be paid into the Council's holding account before works proceed and will be paid direct to the contractor upon completion.</p> <p>Assistance includes the contractor's standard warranty period only and does not include any ongoing repairs, servicing or maintenance costs; these are the responsibility of the applicant.</p>
<b>Conditions</b>	<p>A land charge will be placed on adapted owner occupied properties which will be recovered where the property is sold or otherwise disposed of within 10 years of the grant works being completed and where the cost of the grant exceeds £5,000. The limit of the maximum charge is £10,000.</p> <p>Repeat applications will not be considered until after a 5 year period has passed from completion of works.</p>
<b>Assistance</b>	<b><u>Handyperson Adaptation Service</u></b>



<b>Purpose</b>	The handyman Adaptation Service helps people be safe and secure in their own homes through minor adaptations and small practical jobs.
<b>Eligibility</b>	The service is open to anyone living in the private sector in Nottinghamshire aged 60 or older, or any adult with a disability  The works required must contribute to enabling someone to continue living independently at home.
<b>Eligible Work</b>	The adaptations service provides and installs items such as: grab rails, hand rails, half steps, lever taps, key safes, etc.  The handyman service can complete small jobs such as fixing loose carpets to prevent a fall (see appendix for full list)
<b>Financial Arrangements</b>	The adaptations service provides and installs up to £1,000 worth of adaptations in a single job. There is no charge for the materials.  There is a £15 charge for the handyman service, plus the cost of the materials used
<b>Application</b>	This service can be accessed by contacting Nottinghamshire County Council
<b>Payment</b>	Payment is made directly to the contractor
<b>Conditions</b>	None

<b>Assistance</b>	<b><u>Assistive Technology</u></b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Assistive technology is equipment that individuals can use to help them live safely and independently in their own home, including sensors that are monitored 24/7 by a support centre
<b>Eligibility</b>	Equipment is provided following a needs assessment by the Housing Team
<b>Eligible Work</b>	Equipment available includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fall detector</li> <li>• Smoke/heat detector</li> <li>• Flood detector</li> <li>• Bogus caller/panic alarm</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property exist sensor</li> <li>• Bed occupancy sensor</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Arrangements</b>	Equipment is provided free of charge and the monitoring service provided by the support centre is free of charge for the first 3 months
<b>Application</b>	This service can be accessed by contacting the Housing Team
<b>Payment</b>	Different payment options are available
<b>Conditions</b>	None

### Handyperson Adaptation Service - List of Handyperson jobs

Handy Person Jobs	Exclusions
Window Repairs - plane windows to ensure they fit/close properly	Assembling indoor or outdoor furniture
Door Repairs - plane door to ensure it fits/closes properly	Structural or building work
Door Repairs - repairs to loose handles and hinges	Glazing – windows
Door Repairs - re-hanging of door (if frame is in good condition)	Painting a room
Cupboard repairs - repairs to hinges and/or shelving	Painting fence or gates
Shelving - fit a shelf (for storing meds/to prevent tripping)	Installing burglar alarms
Shelving - repair/re-fix loose shelf	Installing fencing gates
	Decking or repairs to decking
	The service does not extend to gardening, decorating or any job that requires a specialist

<p>Tighten Floor boards (max of 5)</p> <p>Taps repairs - Replace Tap washer/ball valve (dripping tap)</p> <p>Sink blockages</p> <p>Bleed radiators</p> <p>Fit sink and bath plugs</p> <p>Fix toilet seat (tighten screws etc.)</p> <p>Make safe trailing wires</p> <p>Fitting of lampshades</p> <p>Changing plugs</p> <p>Replacement of lightbulbs</p> <p>Fitting of door locks (Wooden and UPVC)</p> <p>Door Safety Chains (wooden doors only)</p> <p>Change bulb in exterior security light</p> <p>Replace smoke alarm batteries</p> <p>Replace Carbon Monoxide Alarm batteries</p>	<p>trades person (such as an electrician, plumber or gas fitter)</p> <p>If the work needs to be carried out by one of the following professionals, the work will not be suitable for HPAS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electrician</li> <li>• Plumber</li> <li>• Drainage</li> <li>• Gardener</li> <li>• Painter and decorator</li> </ul> <p>Suppliers will not be able to carry out any major works that affect the structure of the house</p> <p>Soffits and fascias cannot be repaired or replaced by HPAS Providers</p>
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<p>Fit outside gate bolt and padlock</p> <p>Simple assembly</p> <p>Moving furniture (Standard only e.g. move bed from upstairs to downstairs)</p> <p>Putting up curtains/blinds and rails</p> <p>Hanging mirrors</p> <p>Hanging clocks</p> <p>Securing carpets</p> <p>Replacing raised door thresholds with flat ones</p> <p>Replace fence panels</p> <p>Fix paving – minor works (replace broken slabs and relay uneven slabs – max of 5)</p> <p>Putting up washing line</p> <p>Gutter clearance (ground floor only)</p>	
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