



NRLA Factfinder – Disabled Facilities Grant

This ‘Factfinder’ presents an overview of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), including how private landlords can manage tenant requests or make requests themselves for home adaptations.

What is the Disabled Facilities Grant?

The DFG is a means tested grant that provides financial assistance to disabled individuals who need to make modifications to their home to make it more accessible or suitable for their needs. The grant is administered by local authorities and can cover the cost of wide range of home adaptations.

The grant typically covers the costs of installing major adaptations, while less expensive minor adaptations are usually funded through various local authority grants.

Who is eligible for the Disabled Facilities Grant?

For the purpose of a DFG application, an individual is considered eligible if they meet any of the following criteria:

- their sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired,
- they have a mental disorder or impairment of any kind,
- they are physically substantially disabled by illness, injury or impairment,
- they are a minor and are registered as a disabled child.

Who can apply for the Disabled Facilities Grant?

The application for the DFG can only be made by the owner or tenant where the disabled person lives or is going to live – in many cases, this will not be the disabled person themselves.

The dwelling must also be the main or only residence of the disabled person for whom the adaptations are needed.

How should adaptation requests from tenants be managed?

Where a disabled tenant has indicated that they intend to apply for funding under the DFG, they will need to obtain the landlord’s consent for any work which might be carried out.

Unless the landlord is the grant applicant, the grant application process is the responsibility of the tenant, and the level of the landlord's involvement in further stages of the application process is their choice.

The five year ‘statement of intent’

The statement of intent does not override the tenancy agreement and neither does it translate to a five-year fixed term. However, it does indicate that both the landlord and disabled tenant are willing for the tenancy to continue for up to five years.

How can I make a request on behalf of my tenant?

A landlord can apply for a DFG in respect of a disabled tenant or a disabled member of the tenant's family.

However, as noted above, a landlord must be able to prove that they are the owner of the dwelling to which the application relates. They must also confirm that they intend for that dwelling to be occupied by a disabled tenant for the entirety of the grant condition period (five years).

In all cases it will be necessary for the local authority to confirm that the works proposed are 'necessary and appropriate'. This is usually based on an assessment of the disabled person's needs by an occupational therapist or 'trusted assessor'. The local authority will also need to confirm that the proposed works are 'reasonable and practicable' and this assessment is usually the responsibility of a grants surveyor.

When a landlord applies for the DFG, the local authority may request 'nomination rights' for a period of up to five years. This grants the council the authority to nominate individuals who can reside in the property who would benefit from the adaptation investment.

How much funding is available?

The DFG can meet the reasonable cost of works up to a maximum of £30,000 in England, or £36,000 in Wales.

If a disabled tenant applies and is eligible for the grant, the relevant local housing authority will conduct a means test to determine the amount of funding they can receive. In most cases, the amount awarded is dependent on a tenant's household income and savings.

Where the applicant is eligible for the grant but is in receipt of income related benefits, they will be exempt from means testing. The exemption is also applied for any adaptations needed for a child or young person.

Where a landlord applies for the grant, means testing is not required. However, before allocating the funding, the relevant local housing authority may consider the extent to which the landlord is able to charge a higher rent for the premises because of the works installed.

The landlord can enhance the basic DFG grant by contributing additional funds to make the adaptation a much more permanent fixture. They can then negotiate with the local authority for an elevated work specification.

What type of work will be done?

The types of adaptations that can be installed depend on the disabled tenants needs and requirements.

The relevant local housing authority will arrange for a trusted assessor or occupational therapist to assess what works are necessary and appropriate. Common adaptations installed through DFG funding include level access showers and stairlifts.

Prior to installation, the landlord should agree with the tenant who is responsible for any ongoing servicing, maintenance and repair cost after the end of the warranty period.

Who carries out the work?

Once the nature of the work has been determined and consent has been granted by the landlord, most local councils will go through a tendering process to select the most cost-efficient bid.

Usually, councils have an approved list of contractors that they rely on to carry out the work. Where the landlord wishes to use their own contractors, they must demonstrate competitiveness and an ability to carry out the proposed adaptations to a reasonable standard.

Who is responsible for the maintenance of adaptations?

The landlord should agree with the tenant who is responsible for any ongoing servicing, maintenance and repair costs after the end of the warranty period.

Typically, further information on warranties and any applicable warranty period will be provided by the relevant local authority to the applicant as part of the grant approval process.

What happens at the end of the tenancy?

Once a tenancy comes to an end a landlord can either have the property restored to its original condition or the adaptations and accessibility features can be retained.

If a landlord chooses to have the property restored back to its original condition, the original agreement giving consent will determine who is liable for the costs of this. The funding provided through the DFG typically does not cover the cost of removing any adaptations at the conclusion of the tenancy unless this has been agreed to with the local authority.

It is advised that when a landlord agrees for the property to be adapted, they clearly state in writing and agree with all parties on who is responsible for restoring the property to its original condition should this be necessary.

Should I keep the adaptations at the end of the tenancy?

By retaining the adaptations in your property, it can be made available to another tenant who requires them. Local authorities and specialist agents can assist you in finding tenants seeking such properties.

Future demand for adapted properties

The private rented sector has experienced a notable increase in the number of renters aged between 45 and 64. As result, it is expected that the sector will also see an increase in the number of renters aged 65 and above within the next two decades. With these changes in mind, it is vital that landlords anticipate the future demand for adapted properties and should be ready to cater for a more diverse range of needs than they have typically dealt with in the past.

Can I reject a tenant's request for adaptations?

Under the Equality Act 2010, a landlord cannot unreasonably withhold their consent to an adaptation or attach unreasonable conditions to consent. Before objecting to the installation of adaptations, a landlord should carefully consider whether any concerns they may have are reasonable.

Where can I find more information?

To obtain further information about how to handle requests or make a request for the DFG, your first point of contact will be the relevant local authority responsible for administering it. However, additional information about the DFG can be found below.

Organisations	Documents and Guidance
Foundations – the National Body for Disabled Facilities Grant	Foundations – Landlords Application for a Disabled Facilities Grant
	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – Disabled Facilities Grant Delivery: Guidance for Local Authorities in England
	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales – Disabled Facilities Grant Factsheet
	House of Commons Library – Disabled Facilities Grants for Home Adaptations
	National Residential Landlords Association – Adaptations: A Good Practise Guide