

By Wendy Wilson
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Disabled facilities grants (DFGs) for home adaptations



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Contributing Authors

Hannah Cromarty, SPS

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Summary

This paper provides an overview of the disabled facilities grants (DFGs) system and other help available to secure disabled adaptations in residential premises.

It focuses on the system in England, but DFGs in Wales are issued under the same [governing legislation](#). DFGs are also available from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Scotland operates a different scheme of assistance.

What are DFGs?

Mandatory DFGs are available from local authorities in England and Wales and the Housing Executive in Northern Ireland for essential adaptations to give disabled people better freedom of movement into and around their homes, and to give access to essential facilities within the home. They are issued subject to a means test. There is an upper limit on the help available of £30,000 in England, £36,000 in Wales and £35,000 in Northern Ireland.

DFG funding and delivery

Funding in England is channelled into the Better Care Fund (BCF) which consists of pooled resources from several sources, including NHS England. One of the aims of the BCF is to achieve improved integration of care and support services.

[Central government funding for DFGs in England was set to be £573 million in 2023/24 and to remain at this level in the next financial year.](#) On 4 April 2023, an additional £102 million was announced as a capital top up “[over 2 years to increase funding and support for people to adapt or maintain their homes.](#)”

Research highlights pressures around funding compared to levels of need for adaptation works. This can translate into long waits for adaptations. The [2019-20 English Housing Survey report on home adaptations](#) recorded 53% (1 million) households who did not have all the adaptations they needed, an increase from 45% in 2014/15.

An [external review of DFGs](#) commissioned by the Government which reported in December 2018 identified several challenges for DFGs, including:

- A reduction in local authority contributions meaning increased central government funding hadn't resulted in as many people being helped.
- Limited analysis of local needs and demand, and limited advertising of DFGs for fear of stimulating demand.
- Complexities within the delivery system.
- Restrictive upper limits on grant. High levels of 'drop outs' due to a requirement to contribute.
- Tenure inequalities – relatively few grants are issued to private sector tenants.
- A need for DFGs to evolve in line with changing expectations and advances in information technology to remain relevant.

The Government's [National Disability Strategy](#) (July 2021) promised new DFG guidance for authorities in England. [This was published in March 2022 with the aim of helping authorities deliver DFGs effectively and efficiently.](#)

The social care white paper, [People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform](#) (updated March 2022) promised several developments including an increase to the maximum grant limit; potential changes to the DFG means test; a review of how DFG funding is allocated; and funding for a new service for minor repairs and changes. Consultation on these matters was expected in 2022 but is still outstanding.

Building new accessible homes

The lack of a requirement to build new homes to lifetime home standards is identified as a contributing factor to growing demand for adaptations.

The [National Disability Strategy](#) (July 2021) recorded an increase in the proportion of homes in England developed “with key accessible features” from 5% in 2009 to 9% in 2018. The Strategy included a commitment to take “immediate steps” to:

- boost the supply of housing for disabled people by raising accessibility standards for new homes, increasing the supply of affordable homes, including supported housing, and accelerating the adaptation of existing homes by improving the efficiency of local authority delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grant
- extend disabled tenants' rights on accessibility
- ensure the safety of disabled people in buildings, for when there are emergencies

The Government response to [consultation on raising accessibility standards for new homes](#) was published in July 2022. There's a commitment to raising accessibility standards for new homes through changes to Building Regulations.

1

DFG eligibility and purpose

Mandatory disabled facilities grants (DFGs) are available from local authorities in England and Wales and the [Housing Executive in Northern Ireland](#), subject to a means test. The grants pay for essential adaptations to give disabled people better freedom of movement into and around their homes, and to give access to essential facilities within the home.¹

The legislation governing DFGs in England and Wales is the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.² Discretionary DFGs were abolished with effect from July 2003.³

The type of work that mandatory DFGs can cover includes:

- making it easier to get into and out of the dwelling by, for example, widening doors and installing ramps;
- ensuring the safety of the disabled person and other occupants by, for example, providing a specially adapted room in which it would be safe to leave a disabled person unattended or improved lighting to ensure better visibility;
- making access easier to the living room;
- providing or improving access to the bedroom, and kitchen toilet, washbasin and bath (and/or shower) facilities; for example, by installing a stair lift or providing a downstairs bathroom;
- improving or providing a heating system in the home which is suitable to the needs of the disabled person;
- adapting heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use; and
- improving access and movement around the home to enable the disabled person to care for another person who lives in the property, such as a spouse, child or another person for whom the disabled person cares.

¹ Scotland operates a different grant system to that in England and Wales. Although grant assistance may be available for disabled adaptations it is not issued in the form of a DFG.

² The powers of the Secretary of State contained within the 1996 Act, so far as they are exercisable in relation to Wales, were transferred to the National Assembly for Wales by the National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions) Order 1999 (S.I. No. 1999/672) and have been transferred to Welsh Ministers by virtue of section 162 and paragraph 30 of Schedule 11 to the Government of Wales Act 2006.

³ The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002

On 22 May 2008, access to a garden was brought within the scope of a DFG where the work facilitates access to and from a garden by a disabled occupant or makes access to a garden safe for a disabled occupant.⁴

Before issuing a DFG a local housing authority must satisfy itself that the works are **necessary** and **appropriate** to meet the needs of the disabled person, and are **reasonable** and **practicable** depending on the age and condition of the property. In reaching a decision, the authority will consider whether the works:

- are needed to provide for a care plan to be implemented which will enable the disabled occupant to remain living in their existing home as independently as possible;
- would meet, as far as possible, the assessed needs of the disabled person taking into account both their medical and physical needs; and
- distinguish between what are desirable and possible legitimate aspirations of the disabled person, and what is needed, and for which grant support is fully justified.

Section 24(3) of the 1996 Act imposes a duty on local housing authorities to consult social services authorities in coming to a view on whether the proposed works are necessary and appropriate,⁵ although housing authorities themselves must decide whether the works are reasonable and practicable.

Local authorities are required to issue a decision on a properly completed DFG application within six months of its receipt.

When giving [evidence](#) to the Joint Committee on Human Rights on 25 November 2011, then-Minister for Housing and Local Government, Grant Shapps, said he had asked the Housing Adaptations Consortium⁶ to produce an updated good practice guide on DFGs.⁷ The guidance, [Home Adaptations for Disabled People – a detailed guide to related legislation, guidance and good practice](#) (PDF) was published in 2013.

Current good practice guidance for local authorities was published in March 2022: [Disabled Facilities Grant \(DFG\) delivery: guidance for local authorities in England](#).

[GOV.UK](#) has basic information and guidance for people interested in applying for a DFG in England.

⁴ The Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008 (SI 2008/1189)

⁵ This assessment is usually carried out by an occupational therapist.

⁶ The consortium is made up of a broad spectrum of national organisations working together to champion quality provision of home adaptations for disabled people.

⁷ Joint Committee on Human Rights, [The implementation of the right of disabled people to independent living](#) (PDF), Oral Evidence, 25 November 2011, Q256

1.1

Social housing tenants' DFG eligibility

Although the DFG framework and mandatory aspect of the grant apply across all tenures, local authorities cannot use their DFG budget to fund adaptations to local authority properties. Instead, they will seek to fund adaptations to their own stock from their Housing Revenue Account resources:

Government funding for the Disabled Facilities Grant is intended to fund adaptations for owner occupiers, private tenants, or tenants of private registered providers (housing associations). Eligible council tenants can apply for a DFG in the same way as any other applicant. However local housing authorities with a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) should self-fund home adaptations for council tenants through this account. A provision was made for expenditure in the HRA as a 'Disabled Facilities Allowance' in the 2012-13 self-financing settlement, alongside information on how to calculate it in subsequent years. The same applies to applications from tenants living in dwellings managed by an Arms-Length Management Organisation (ALMO) but owned by the local authority.⁸

The 2018 external review of DFGs commissioned by the Government (see section 5.2) identified a need to review access to DFGs for social housing tenants:

For housing association tenants, it is not clear to what extent their landlord should take responsibility for adaptations which can often lead to permission being withheld or disagreements about funding. Council tenants have the right to apply for grant, but funding must come from the Housing Revenue Account rather than the DFG. This needs further review.⁹

⁸ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), [Disabled Facilities Grant \(DFG\) delivery: Guidance for local authorities in England](#), 28 March 2022, para 2.8

⁹ MHCLG, [Disabled Facilities Grant and other adaptations: external review](#), December 2018, p11

2

The amount of grant: test of resources

Once the necessary conditions are fulfilled, DFGs are mandatory, subject to a means test and an upper grant limit. The purpose of the means test is “to ensure that DFG funding reaches those people who are on the lowest incomes and least able to afford to pay for the adaptations themselves.”¹⁰

The test of resources for grant applicants is set out in the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996).¹¹ Grant applicants may receive a full grant or may be required to contribute towards the cost of the works.

The maximum grant limit in England is £30,000.¹² In Wales, the maximum grant is £36,000,¹³ while in Northern Ireland it is £35,000 but can be increased to £70,000 in some cases.¹⁴ Research published by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) in 2011 identified four stages within the means testing process:

- Assess how much the household needs to live on. This is referred to as ‘allowable income’ and is calculated using a set of standard allowances for living costs using basic amounts of income support/pension credit and a flat rate allowance for housing costs.
- Compare this with their actual income to see if they have any ‘surplus’ income they could use to pay off a loan. A ‘tariff’ income is added on for any savings over £6,000. If the household is in receipt of any means tested benefits, they are automatically ‘passported’ through and awarded a 100 per cent grant even if they have some small surplus income according to this calculation.
- For those not in receipt of means tested benefits, calculate how big a loan they could afford to pay off using their ‘surplus’ income. The calculations assume a loan period of 10 years for owner-occupiers and 5 years for tenants at a standard rate of interest and incorporate ‘tapers’.

¹⁰ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), [Disabled Facilities Grant \(DFG\) delivery: Guidance for local authorities in England](#), 28 March 2022, para 4.30

¹¹ SI 1996/2890, as amended

¹² The Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008 (SI 2008/1189)

¹³ (SI 2008/2370) the maximum amount in Wales has always been higher than that in England due to the age and nature of the housing stock in Wales and the country’s topography. See section 7 for information on removing the means test for small and medium adaptations in Wales from April 2021.

¹⁴ [Nidirect: Disabled Facilities Grants](#). The relevant legislation is [The Housing Renovation etc. Grants \(Grant Limit\) \(Amendment\) Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2023](#)

- Compare the size of the loan they could afford with the cost of the work needed to see whether they qualify for a grant. If the calculated loan amount is the same or greater than the cost of the adaptations, they do not get any grant. If the loan amount is less than the cost of works, the amount of grant is calculated as the total cost of works minus the calculated loan amount.¹⁵

With effect from 31 December 2008, the Government made changes to the means test to assist ex-service personnel applying for a Disabled Facilities Grant.¹⁶ Certain payments to the most seriously disabled service personnel are now disregarded for the purposes of assessing eligibility.

For more information on the means test see [Appendix B of the 2022 delivery guidance](#).¹⁷ The guidance suggests authorities should carry out a preliminary means test as an early warning to applicants that they may need to make a contribution.¹⁸

2.1

DFGs for disabled children

The Department for Social Development in Northern Ireland announced its intention to abolish the DFG means test for parents of children with disabilities in December 2003. Wales followed with its own announcement on 27 April 2005.

On 27 October 2005, then-Minister for Housing and Planning, Yvette Cooper, announced the means test in respect of DFG applications from families with a disabled child in England would be removed as soon as the necessary secondary legislation could be made.

The Housing Renewal Grants (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2005 came into force on 31 December 2005.¹⁹ Regulation 6 amended the 1996 Regulations to provide that the means test would no longer apply where an application is made by the parent or guardian of a disabled child or young person. This provision has applied to applications received by local authorities since 31 December 2005.

In April 2021, Foundations, the national body for Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs), published guidance on housing adaptations for children and young people with challenging behaviours.²⁰

¹⁵ BRE, [Disabled Facilities Grant allocation methodology and means test: Final report](#), (PDF) 2011

¹⁶ The Housing Renewal Grants (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008/3104)

¹⁷ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), [Disabled Facilities Grant \(DFG\) delivery: Guidance for local authorities in England](#), 28 March 2022, Appendix B, B98

¹⁸ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), [Disabled Facilities Grant \(DFG\) delivery: Guidance for local authorities in England](#), 28 March 2022, para 4.31

¹⁹ SI 2005/3323

²⁰ Foundations, [Adaptations for children and young people with behaviours that challenge](#), April 2021

3 Funding DFGs (England)

Since their introduction, core funding for DFGs has come from central government, although local authorities make additional contributions.²¹

Until 2008/09 DCLG was obliged to meet 60% of the cost of whatever local authorities spent on DFGs. Expenditure above these allocations had to be met from other local authority resources. The 60:40 DFG funding split ended in April 2008. The aim was to give authorities increased flexibility to design services to fit with local delivery arrangements and the needs of individuals.

From 2010/11 to 2014/15 funding for DFGs was paid to local authorities as a non-ring-fenced payment as part of the Single Capital Pot through a determination under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. This meant funding for several programmes could be pooled together.

3.1 Incorporation into The Better Care Fund

In 2013, the Government announced the creation of the Better Care Fund (BCF) – the Fund has been operational since April 2015. It's a pooled fund from which Integrated Care Boards and local authorities can jointly commission health and social care services.²²

Concerns were expressed by Age UK that incorporation into the BCF could ration funds to higher need categories rather than those with lower needs for whom the grant could play a key preventative role.²³ Age UK was supportive of the opportunity to use funding for integrated care and support needs, but made the point that only a small proportion of older people who need a DFG actually receive one and that the system involves lengthy delays.²⁴

The setup of the BCF means that funding is paid directly to the county council; previously, for two-tier councils, the DFG was paid direct by central government to the district council as the council with housing responsibility. As the charity Care and Repair England noted, the new arrangement requires a different approach:

This is important because:

²¹ Cerebra and University of Leeds, [Disabled Children and the Cost Effectiveness of Home Adaptations & Disabled Facilities Grants: a Small Scale Pilot Study](#), (PDF) June 2017, p11

²² Previously Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). the Health and Care Act 2022 abolished CCGs

²³ Age UK, [Housing in later life](#), (PDF) July 2014, p7

²⁴ As above.

i) It presents an opportunity to consider how to integrate provision of help with home adaptations across housing, health and social care systems to achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes.

ii) In two tier areas the housing authority and the social care authority will have to establish new working relationships to manage the DFG funding because the legal responsibility for provision of DFG (a mandatory grant) remains with the housing authority [ie. Districts/Boroughs], whilst the DFG funding payment from national government is made to the top tier local authority.

iii) In order to meet a range of performance outcomes and to manage local needs, a budget for provision of DFG will usually require contributions from housing, social care and health. The allocation from national to local government is intended to contribute towards meeting local need, but is not expected to meet all local needs.²⁵

In response to a parliamentary question in April 2017, the Minister, Marcus Jones, said DCLG had included a condition in the 2017/18 DFG determination letter stipulating “upper tier authorities must pass funding for adaptations down to their lower tier authorities promptly, and in full, unless the lower tier authorities have expressly agreed that a portion of the funding can be used for wider social care capital projects.”²⁶

[The Better Care Fund Policy Framework 2023 to 2025](#) was published on 4 April 2023.

3.2

DFG funding

Funding from central government for DFGs increased from £157 million in 2009/10 to £573 million in 2020/21. Funding remained at £573 million in 2021/22 and was to remain at this level in 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.²⁷

On 4 April 2023 the Government published [Next steps to put People at the Heart of Care](#) which announced an additional £102 million “over 2 years to increase funding and support for people to adapt or maintain their homes.”²⁸

The additional funding “will be distributed as a capital top up to the £573 million per year DFG funding and managed in the same way through the BCF.”²⁹

²⁵ Care and Repair England, [Disabled Facilities Grant Funding via Better Care Funds – An Opportunity to Improve Outcomes](#), (PDF) April 2015, p2

²⁶ [PQ 71194 \[Disabled Facilities Grants\], 24 April 2017](#)

²⁷ [PQ 89665 \[Disability: Social Rented Housing\], 16 December 2021](#)

²⁸ DHCS, [Next steps to put People at the Heart of Care](#), 4 April 2023

²⁹ As above

The policy paper says local authorities should use the additional funding to provide more supplementary services which are “agile and help people stay independent” by using the updated March 2022 DFG guidance.

Local authority contributions

After the Autumn Statement 2010 and associated austerity measures, central government funding for repairs grants ceased. Some of this funding had been used by authorities to supplement their DFG budgets. The 2018 external review of DFGs commissioned by the Government (see section 5.2) noted the removal of £300 million in repair grant funding resulted in a reduction in local authority contributions to DFGs with the impact felt in 2012/13. Thereafter, “Local authority funding picked up in 2013/14 but declined to a very low level in 2016/17 at the point when central government funding increased significantly.”³⁰

³⁰ MHCLG, [Disabled Facilities Grant and other adaptations: external review](#), December 2018, para 3.3

4

DFG activity

Local authorities are asked to submit annual returns to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) detailing their DFG activity. The returns were made voluntary in 2010.

Foundations, the national body for home improvement agencies, uses the data to monitor and analyse the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grant funded adaptations.

Returns submitted over 2019/20 for England showed 70,563 grant applications were received leading to the adaptation of 58,181 homes (for owner occupiers and tenants of private landlords or housing associations).³¹

The Minister, Luke Hall, provided estimates of DFGs delivered between 2014 and 2019 in response to a parliamentary question in February 2020:

- 2014-15 40,645
- 2015-16 40,800
- 2016-17 46,000
- 2017-18 47,850
- 2018-19 53,500³²

143 local authorities with council stock completed 32,695 home adaptations over 2019/20 - local housing authorities adapted a total of 103,258 homes.³³

The increase in DFG funding since 2015/16 has seen an increase in activity but Foundations observed that the cost of DFGs completed “has stayed remarkably stable over the last decade.”³⁴ 52% of grants awarded are for less than £5,000, with 14% at more than £15,000. The most common adaptations are level access showers and stairlifts.³⁵

An increase in the proportion of DFGs awarded to housing association tenants has been observed. The number issued to private rented sector tenants also increased in 2019/2020 when compared to 2018/19.³⁶

³¹ Foundations, [Disabled Facilities Grants: Activity Report for 2019/20 \(PDF\)](#), January 2021, p3

³² [PQ 1189 \[Disabled Facilities Grants\], 24 February 2020](#)

³³ Foundations, [Disabled Facilities Grants: Activity Report for 2019/20 \(PDF\)](#), January 2021, p3

³⁴ As above, p6

³⁵ As above.

³⁶ As above, p7

On 23 March 2021, the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) issued a call “for greater co-operation between private landlords and local authorities to resolve the urgent need for more adapted private rented accommodation.” The NRLA’s press release referred to research showing 79% of landlords had no knowledge of DFGs but after finding out more “68 percent of landlords were more willing to adapt their properties.”³⁷ The press release also announced the publication of [specific guidance for landlords](#) on adaptations.

Foundations noted a “continuing trend” for more DFGs to be awarded to people of working age, with a smaller proportion going to older people.³⁸

The 2018 external review of DFGs commissioned by the Government (see section 5.2) identified an “urgent need” to work towards 85,000 DFGs per year to relieve pressure on health and social care.³⁹

³⁷ NRLA, [NRLA calls on local authorities to work with private landlords to close the adapted properties gap](#), 23 March 2021

³⁸ Foundations, [Disabled Facilities Grants: Activity Report for 2019/20](#) (PDE), January 2021, p8

³⁹ MHCLG, [Disabled Facilities Grant and other adaptations: external review](#), December 2018, para 3.8

5 Do DFGs meet the need for adaptations?

The English Housing Survey (EHS) conducted by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, DLUHC) provides some data on the extent of demand for housing adaptations.

The [2019-20 EHS report on home adaptations](#) recorded:

- In total, around 8% of households in England had someone (of any age) with a long-standing health condition and required adaptations in their home.
- Overall, 19% of these households said their home was not currently suitable for their needs.
- The proportion was lower in older age groups. In households containing someone aged 75+, 13% said their home was not suitable for their needs (around 101,000 households).
- The most common types of adaptations needed in households with a 75+ year-old were:
 - Hand/grab rails in the kitchen or bathroom (around 359,000 households).
 - Hand/grab/stair rails elsewhere inside the home (309,000 households).
 - Other external hand/grab rails (226,000 households).
 - Special toilet seat or other aids to use the toilet (199,000 households).
 - Bath/shower seats and other bathing aids (185,000 households).
- Around 51% of households with a 75+ year old needing adaptations said they did not have the adaptations they needed (around 405,000 households).

The number of households reporting they didn't have all the adaptations they needed had increased since 2014/15:

In 2019-20, 47% of households that required adaptations had all the adaptations they needed in their home. Consequently, 53% (1 million) of households did not have all the adaptations that they needed, an increase

since 2014-15 when 45% (864,000) of households that required adaptations lacked one or more of the adaptations they needed.⁴⁰

When asked why adaptations had not been carried out, 18% (185,000) said they thought the work would be unaffordable.⁴¹

On publication of the data, the Centre for Ageing Better and Habinteg called for urgent action to address the challenges faced by the 1 million households lacking necessary home adaptations.⁴²

Reports have identified the benefits of investing in home adaptations. For example, a 2017 report by the Centre for Ageing Better summarised the benefits:

...we found that both minor and major home adaptations can improve a range of outcomes for people in later life, including improved performance of everyday activities, improved mental health and prevention of falls and injuries, especially when done in combination with any necessary repairs, delivered in a timely manner and in line with people's personal goals.⁴³

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) commissioned the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to assess the DFG process. The resulting report [Disabled Facilities Grant allocation methodology and means test: Final report](#) (February 2011) said there was a need for a cost benefit analysis of home adaptations:

We need to compile compelling evidence to demonstrate how money spent on adaptations will save money on health and care costs. This needs to take the form of rigorous cost benefit analyses supported by case studies and good practice examples.⁴⁴

5.1

New-build homes: accessibility

Research into DFGs highlights pressures around funding compared to levels of demand for adaptation works. A contributing factor to growing demand has been the lack of a requirement to build new homes to a lifetime accessibility standard, thereby reducing the need for future adaptations.

Authorities are required to consider the needs of older and disabled people when planning for new homes.⁴⁵ [Planning Practice Guidance](#) (2019) aims to help authorities to prepare planning policies to meet the housing needs of

⁴⁰ [English Housing Survey Home adaptations report, 2019-20](#), (PDF) July 2021, p4

⁴¹ As above, para 3.13

⁴² Centre for Ageing Better, [Figures show one million households live in homes that don't meet their needs](#), 15 July 2021

⁴³ Centre for Ageing Better, [Room to improve: The role of home adaptations in improving later life](#), (PDF) November 2017

⁴⁴ DCLG, [Disabled Facilities Grant allocation methodology and means test](#), (PDF) February 2011, p7

⁴⁵ [National Planning Policy Framework](#), para 62 [accessed on 3 April 2023]

older and disabled persons. Part M of the Building Regulations sets out requirements for housing accessibility in new-build homes.⁴⁶

The House of Lords Science and Technology Committee published the report of its inquiry into [Ageing: Science, Technology and Healthy Living](#) in January 2021. The Committee noted Government plans to increase the availability of accessible housing but called for the use of planning rules “to ensure that homes and communities are accessible for people with limited mobility and adaptable as their needs change with age.”⁴⁷

The Government’s response to the committee’s report described action it was taking in this area:

Building Regulations have the biggest impact on the accessibility of new homes for older and disabled people which is why the Government recently consulted on options to raise the accessibility of new homes, recognising the importance of suitable homes for older and disabled people. Government has also committed to a full review of Part M of the Building Regulations, including a research programme and a review of provisions relating to accessible and adaptable housing. Evidence gathered will help Government consider what changes can be made by either mandating a higher accessibility standard or reconsidering the way existing optional standards are used.

Further to this, the Government recently consulted on planning reforms. The white paper sets out the high-level detail of the proposals and officials are now engaging with stakeholders in order to help shape each part of the system. This includes seeking the views of older and disabled people and groups who represent their needs.⁴⁸

MHCLG commissioned PRP Innovate “to scope out existing evidence to support the evaluation of Part M and Approved Document M of the Building Regulations” with the following key objectives:

- To establish and analyse this available evidence on the benefits of accessible housing;
- To identify what further research is required to evidence the benefits of these standards.

PRP’s findings were published in January 2021.⁴⁹ PRP identified a need for: “Further dedicated research to understand the benefits of more accessible housing”.⁵⁰ The [National Disability Strategy](#) (July 2021) referred to additional Government-commissioned research “to develop the statutory guidance on

⁴⁶ MHCLG, [Approved Document M: Access to and use of buildings](#), updated 7 June 2021

⁴⁷ House of Lords Science and Technology Committee, [Ageing: Science, Technology and Healthy Living](#), 15 January 2021, HL paper 183 2019-21, para 292

⁴⁸ [Government response to Ageing: Science, Technology and Healthy Living report](#), 15 March 2021, pp17-18

⁴⁹ MHCLG, [Research on Part M: access to and use of buildings](#), 20 January 2021

⁵⁰ As above, p9

meeting Building Regulations, covering access to and use of buildings (Approved Document M).⁵¹

[Consultation on raising accessibility standards for new homes](#) took place in 2020 with the [Government response](#) published in July 2022.⁵² The consultation exercise included a full review of Part M of the Building Regulations and:

...a research programme on the prevalence and demographics of impairment in England and ergonomic requirements and experiences of disabled people. It also reviews use of accessible and adaptable housing standards at the local level. This work will also help identify the technical changes needed to update statutory guidance (Approved Document M).⁵³

The Government intends to raise the minimum accessibility standard for new build homes subject to further consultation on technical details:

Government proposes that the most appropriate way forward is to mandate the current M4(2) (Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings) requirement in Building Regulations as a minimum standard for all new homes – option 2 in the consultation. M4(1) will apply by exception only, where M4(2) is impractical and unachievable (as detailed below).⁵⁴

On publication of the Government response there was some disappointment about the decision not to require a minimum proportion of new homes to be built to fully wheelchair-accessible standards, known as M4(3).⁵⁵

The [National Disability Strategy](#) (July 2021) recorded an increase in the proportion of homes in England developed “with key accessible features” from 5% in 2009 to 9% in 2018.⁵⁶ The Strategy included a commitment to take “immediate steps” to:

- boost the supply of housing for disabled people by raising accessibility standards for new homes, increasing the supply of affordable homes, including supported housing, and accelerating the adaptation of existing homes by improving the efficiency of local authority delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grant, worth £573 million in 2021/22
- extend disabled tenants’ rights on accessibility⁵⁷
- ensure the safety of disabled people in buildings, for when there are emergencies⁵⁸

⁵¹ [National Disability Strategy](#), CP 512, July 2021, p36

⁵² DLUHC, [Raising accessibility standards for new homes: summary of consultation responses and government response](#), 29 July 2022

⁵³ As above, para 4

⁵⁴ As above, para 73

⁵⁵ See for example: [Government’s long-awaited accessible housing plan ‘does not go far enough’ – Disability News Service](#), 4 August 2022

⁵⁶ [National Disability Strategy](#), CP 512, July 2021, p35

⁵⁷ For more information see Library paper CBP03133, [Disabled adaptations in leasehold flats and common parts](#).

⁵⁸ [National Disability Strategy](#), CP 512, July 2021, p36

5.2

The external review of DFGs (2018) and Government response

The need for adaptations to existing homes will continue to be significant even if new homes are built to higher accessibility standards. The House of Lords Science and Technology Committee observed:

...existing homes without suitable features for old-age living will continue to dominate the housing sector—almost all existing homes are expected to remain in use, and new homes are built at a rate of up to 1% of existing stock per year.⁵⁹

The Government commissioned an external review of DFGs in February 2018. The review was carried out by the University of West of England and reported in December 2018.⁶⁰

The review identified several challenges for DFGs, including:

- A reduction in local authority contributions meaning that increased central government funding hadn't resulted in as many people being helped.
- Limited analysis of local needs and demand, and limited advertising of DFGs for fear of stimulating demand.
- Complexities within the delivery system.
- Restrictive upper limits on grant. High levels of 'drop outs' due to a requirement to contribute.
- Tenure inequalities – relatively few grants are issued to private sector tenants.
- A need for DFGs to evolve in line with changing expectations and advances in information technology to remain relevant.
- A need to move to an 'investment' approach so decisions are made to support long-term health and wellbeing rather than tackling crises at the point they occur.⁶¹

Many of the recommendations reinforced those of previous reviews and guidance but which had not been implemented.

The [National Disability Strategy](#) (July 2021) said, following the review, MHCLG and DHSC would jointly publish new guidance for local authorities in England

⁵⁹ House of Lords Science and Technology Committee, [Ageing: Science, Technology and Healthy Living](#), 15 January 2021, HL paper 183 2019-21, para 292

⁶⁰ MHCLG, [Disabled Facilities Grant and other adaptations: external review](#), December 2018

⁶¹ As above., [summary report](#), pp3-4

on effective delivery of DFGs during 2021. The new guidance was published on 28 March 2022.⁶²

The 2018 review's key findings and recommendations are set out under the headings below. The new delivery guidance for local authorities published in March 2022 seeks to address many of the issues raised by setting out "recommended best practice, to help local authorities provide a best practice adaptation service to disabled tenants and residents in their area."⁶³

A more strategic approach

The review identified that responsibility for the customer pathway "is often split between different organisations and departments that have separate objectives and budgets."⁶⁴ Recommendations included:

- A Housing and Health Partnership Board in each area as a requirement of DFG funding with representatives from housing, health and social care.
- Each Better Care Fund/Health & Wellbeing Board to report separately on DFG funding and on a new metric 'the number of people helped to remain independent at home'.
- A single adaptations policy based on the needs of the locality, reviewed annually and signed off by the Health & Wellbeing Board.⁶⁵

Joining up operationally

The review identified issues with a two-part process which usually involves social care services in the assessment process, with housing dealing with the grant application. This can result in "a long and difficult journey involving delay and frustration."⁶⁶ The review recommended:

- Integrated teams "in all areas" to simplify and speed up customer journeys.
- A single point of access for customers with clear customer pathways.
- Better analysis of local need to develop preventative strategies and determine levels of revenue and capital funding.

⁶² Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), [Disabled Facilities Grant \(DFG\) delivery: Guidance for local authorities in England](#), 28 March 2022

⁶³ As above, para 1.3

⁶⁴ MHCLG, [Disabled Facilities Grant and other adaptations: external review](#), December 2018, p4

⁶⁵ As above., pp4-5

⁶⁶ As above., p5

- Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) policies to be developed and adopted in all areas to provide more flexible use of DFGs.⁶⁷
- Transformation funding equivalent to 1% of the DFG budget to enable change to happen across the country.⁶⁸

Updating the regulations

Distribution formula

The review recommended a new formula for the distribution of DFG funding based on “the number of people with a disability, income (from benefits data), tenure split (from MHCLG data) and regional building costs.” Mitigation for ‘losers’ would be achieved by a phased introduction.⁶⁹

The social care White Paper, [People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform](#) (updated March 2022) said:

- will look at the way DFG funding is allocated to local authorities. This will help ensure better alignment with local demand so that more adaptations reach those who need them most. The government will consult on a new approach in 2022.⁷⁰

The consultation had not taken place at the time of writing.

The means test

The means test attracts a lot of criticism – it is viewed as complicated, unfair and out of date. The review recommended aligning the DFG and social care means tests:

It would also address issues of unfairness in the present test by ignoring earned income and actual housing costs. Aligning DFG and social care eligibility also creates the potential for spend on home adaptations to be considered as part of the proposed ‘care cap’. This is the maximum amount someone must pay towards their care before a local authority takes responsibility. If it encouraged more people to invest in home adaptations and improve their independence, it would be good for the person’s own health and wellbeing and it would potentially reduce domiciliary or residential care costs.⁷¹

The review acknowledged challenges associated with this approach and suggested an alternative option involving an update to the current test. Irrespective of the approach taken, the review recommended an exemption from means testing for stair lifts and palliative care due to “the savings in

⁶⁷ Local authorities were given extended powers to issue loans and other forms of assistance to DFG applicants under The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 which came into force on 18 July 2002. Authorities cannot use these discretionary powers unless they have published a policy setting out how they intend to use them.

⁶⁸ MHCLG, [Disabled Facilities Grant and other adaptations: external review](#), December 2018, pp6-7

⁶⁹ As above., p7

⁷⁰ DHSC, [People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform](#), updated March 2022

⁷¹ MHCLG, [Disabled Facilities Grant and other adaptations: external review](#), December 2018, pp7-8

health costs associated with preventing falls on stairs and by enabling end of life care at home.”⁷²

The social care White Paper, [People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform](#) (updated March 2022) said the Government:

- recognise that the means test underpinning the DFG is complex and can be difficult to navigate. We will therefore be considering how best to align the means test with the charging reforms. We will publicly consult on this change in 2022⁷³

At the time of writing the consultation had not taken place.

The upper limit

The review recommended an increase of the £30,000 limit in England in line with inflation and some allowance for variations in building costs by locality. The review also called for flexibilities to enable more expensive work “which will also deliver better outcomes and return on investment than the DFG alone could be expected to provide.” More joint funding involving health and social care was highlighted as well as scope to use personal budgets for more tailored solutions.⁷⁴

[People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform](#) (updated March 2022) said the Government would increase the amount the grant can pay for an individual adaptation:

- This will mean that more people who need the grant across the country will be able to access it. We will publicly consult on this change in 2022⁷⁵

At the time of writing the consultation had not taken place.

There’s also a commitment to “fund a new service to make minor repairs and changes in people’s homes, to help people remain independent and safe.”⁷⁶

The 2018 review also recommended DFGs be available to support the cost of moving to a more suitable home.⁷⁷

Developing a market

The review recommended:

- A further five-year funding programme for the DFG to improve certainty and enable local authorities to invest in better procurement.

⁷² As above, p8

⁷³ DHSC, [People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform](#), updated March 2022

⁷⁴ MHCLG, [Disabled Facilities Grant and other adaptations: external review](#), December 2018, p8

⁷⁵ DHSC, [People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform](#), updated March 2022

⁷⁶ As above.

⁷⁷ MHCLG, [Disabled Facilities Grant and other adaptations: external review](#), December 2018, p9

- A national accreditation scheme for builders and tradespeople.
- A smart home starter kit as part of every DFG application
- Local authorities and home improvement agencies to provide advice, information, and handyman services for people outside the DFG.
- Further research on what people do outside the DFG to encourage more 'future-proofing'.⁷⁸

Measuring outcomes

The review saw a need for better local and national data on outcomes “to demonstrate the substantial savings in health and care costs that can be generated by improving the home” and recommended: “Use of NHS number on all files, data sharing protocols, aligned IT systems and improved local and national reporting.”⁷⁹

5.3

Other reviews and research

Centre for Ageing Better 2018

[Homes that Help](#) (July 2018) “summarises the findings of a primary research project exploring the lived experiences of individuals who use home adaptations, and practitioners who work alongside them.” The authors concluded:

We found that people delay making vital changes to their homes because of the clinical appearance of adaptations and their association with vulnerability and loss of independence. Once the decision is made to adapt the home, people are largely unaware of how to access home adaptations, and the process is so complex that even professionals struggle to navigate it easily. While there has been an increase in funding, local authorities are experiencing delays due to a lack of staff or contractor resources to support the process. Despite these delays and complexities in the process, the majority of participants experienced positive outcomes having made vital changes to their home, including fewer falls, ‘getting back to normal’ and reclaiming their home and garden.⁸⁰

The Local Government Association (LGA) responded to the report’s findings, calling on the Government to fully fund DFGs and reverse reductions to councils’ public health grants.⁸¹

⁷⁸ As above, pp10-11

⁷⁹ As above, p12

⁸⁰ Centre for Ageing Better, [Homes that Help](#), (PDF) July 2018, p17

⁸¹ [LGA Press Notice](#), 5 July 2018

Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee (February 2018)

The Committee launched an inquiry into housing for older people in September 2017, the report of which was published in February 2018. On DFGs, the Committee heard evidence about long waiting times and a “clunky process” – there was also concern that the maximum grant limit of £30,000 is insufficient to cover substantial adaptation work. The Committee welcomed what was then the forthcoming review of DFGs (see section 5.2) and called for it to consider:

- Ensuring that adaptations are implemented within a reasonable period of time;
- How to encourage local authorities to innovate in their approach to implementation; and
- The level at which the cap is set.⁸²

Noting particular difficulties people living in private rented housing face in securing landlords’ agreement to adaptations, the Committee also said:

We recommend that the review of the DFG should consider how to ensure that older tenants in the private rented sector secure the adaptations they need. In particular, it should consider the case for allocating government funding to local authorities to make discretionary payments to landlords for the costs of reinstatement or removal of the adaptation once the tenancy has ended.⁸³

The [Government response](#) was published in September 2018.⁸⁴

Equality and Human Rights Commission formal inquiry (2016-2018)

On 14 December 2016 the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) [launched a formal inquiry](#) into housing for disabled people. The inquiry covered England, Scotland and Wales. The report of the inquiry, [Housing and disabled people: Britain’s hidden crisis \(PDF\)](#), was published in May 2018.⁸⁵

The report highlighted increased DFG funding as “an important step” but said installing home adaptations “involves unacceptable bureaucracy and delay”. Disabled people, it said, “are often left waiting for long periods of time, even for minor adaptations.”

⁸² Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, [Housing for Older People](#), (PDF) 9 February 2018, HC 307 2017-19, para 43

⁸³ As above., para 45

⁸⁴ [Government response to the Second Report of Session 2017-19 of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee inquiry into Housing for Older People](#), (PDF) CM 9692, September 2018

⁸⁵ Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Housing and disabled people: Britain’s hidden crisis](#), (PDF) May 2018, p9

A survey conducted as part of the inquiry found the average time between application and installation of a home adaptation was 22 weeks, but some local authorities had waiting times of over a year. Disabled people, the report said, also “face particular problems in the private rented sector”, with reports of private sector landlords being reluctant to allow adaptations.⁸⁶

The report called on local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland to “urgently address the bureaucratic hurdles and delays that exist within adaptations systems, to ensure that low-cost, minor adaptations can be installed quickly and easily.” It called on governments in all three countries to provide additional funding to disabled people’s organisations and advice agencies to increase the supply of independent advice, with a particular focus on the private rented sector.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Housing and disabled people: Britain’s hidden crisis](#), (PDF) May 2018, p9

⁸⁷ Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Housing and disabled people: Britain’s hidden crisis](#), (PDF) May 2018

6 Other sources of assistance

6.1 Social care authorities

Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970

In certain circumstances, DFG applicants who are required to contribute to all or part of the cost of the works may qualify for financial assistance under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (CSDP).

[Section 2 of the CSDP](#) places a duty on local authorities to "make arrangements" for all or any of the matters specified in paragraphs (a) to (h) in the case of any disabled person who is ordinarily resident in their area where they are satisfied that this is necessary to meet the needs of that person. Paragraph (e) covers "the provision of assistance for that person in arranging for the carrying out of any works of adaptation in his home or the provision of any additional facilities designed to secure his greater safety, comfort or convenience".

The delivery guidance (March 2022) says:

Where the social care authority determines that a need has been established it is their duty to assist, even where the housing authority is unable to approve or to fully fund an application. So for example, where an applicant for DFG has difficulty in meeting their assessed contribution from the DFG means test or the work will cost more than the upper limit, the social care authority can step in to provide financial assistance. Or if a disabled person is assessed as needing an adaptation which is outside the scope of the statutory DFG duty, then the social care authority can provide it.

Social care authorities may also consider using their powers under the Care Act 2014 to charge for their services where appropriate.⁸⁸

The Care Act 2014

The Draft Care and Support Bill 2012 proposed consolidating existing legislation, including the CSDP, into "a single, clear statute, supported by new regulations and a single bank of statutory guidance"⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), [Disabled Facilities Grant \(DFG\) delivery: Guidance for local authorities in England](#), 28 March 2022, paras 2.26-2.27

⁸⁹ [Draft Care and Support Bill](#), (PDF) Cm 8386, July 2012, p5

The July 2012 White Paper, [Caring for our future: reforming care and support](#), (PDF)⁹⁰ did not contain proposals to reform the DFG system but said the Bill would “set out new duties to be placed on local authorities to ensure that adult social care and housing departments work together” with a view to ensuring that adaptations and home repair services join up better with people’s care and support.⁹¹

Section 3(1) of the [Care Act 2014](#) places a duty on local authorities to carry out their care and support services with the aim of integrating those services with local NHS and other health services. During the Act’s progress through Parliament, amendments were tabled by then-Shadow Health Minister, Jamie Reed, to promote the integration of care and support into the area of housing. These amendments were subsequently withdrawn.⁹²

Section 6(1) of the Act requires local authorities and their relevant partners to co-operate in exercising their respective care and support functions. Section 7(1) supplements this general duty with a duty to co-operate in specific cases where an individual has care and support needs.

6.2

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002

Local authorities were given extended powers to issue loans and other forms of assistance to DFG applicants under The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 which came into force on 18 July 2002.

Local housing authorities cannot use these discretionary powers unless they have published a policy setting out how they intend to use them. [Chapter 3 of the delivery guidance for local authorities sets out good practice on developing local Housing Assistance Policies.](#)

6.3

Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs)

HIAs advise people on improvements and adaptations to their homes and assist them in applying for local authority grants or loans to carry out the required work. They also help to identify reputable local contractors, helping vulnerable people to avoid 'cowboy' builders. They then oversee the work to ensure clients are satisfied. They are small, locally based not-for-profit

⁹⁰ HM Government, [Caring for our future: reforming care and support](#), Cm 8378, July 2012

⁹¹ As above., p27

⁹² [Care Bill \[HL\] Committee Stage Report](#), 4 March 2014, p12

organisations, although some are part of larger housing and support service organisations or local authorities.

HIAs receive most of their revenue funding from local government.

The Coalition Government provided funding for [FirstStop agency](#) to provide advice on housing options for older people and for Home Improvement Agencies.⁹³ This funding ended in 2016. The Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee called for the Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC) coordinated FirstStop to be re-funded by Government.⁹⁴

6.4 Registers of accessible housing

In [Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A National Housing Strategy for housing in an Ageing Society](#) (PDF, 2008) the then-Government emphasised the need to make the best use of existing adapted housing:

A number of authorities have taken steps to address this situation by developing registers of accessible housing. Such registers contain detailed information about the specific access features of individual properties. This enables an authority precisely to quantify its existing stock of accessible housing and enable more accurate matching with the specific requirements of disabled people. Such registers can achieve significant savings for the public purse. In Cardiff, for example, a register was established, successfully re-housing three hundred disabled people between 2002 and 2005, saving an estimated one million pounds from the disabled facilities grant.

We want local authorities to adopt lettings approaches which give existing and aspiring social housing tenants more choice and control over where they live. So-called choice based lettings (CBL) schemes allow people to apply for vacancies which are openly advertised, for example, in local press or on a website. Ninety-five per cent of authorities in England have already implemented CBL, or plan to do so by our target date of 2010. Where accessible properties are advertised, it is vital that they are properly labelled as to the type and level of access features, so that those with disabilities can select housing which is appropriate to their needs. CBL offers a key opportunity, therefore, to improve information about available accessible housing.

Some CBL schemes already incorporate an Accessible Housing Register. This number is set to increase, both for single local authority CBL schemes, and the growing number of larger CBL schemes which bring together a number of local authority and housing association partners. So, for example, a London-wide Accessible Housing Register is being developed alongside a pan-London choice and mobility scheme. Communities and Local Government has provided £168k to assist London boroughs and RSLs to implement the AHR.

⁹³ HC Deb 23 March 2012 78-9WS

⁹⁴ Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, [Housing for Older People](#), (PDF) 9 February 2018, HC 307 2017-19, para 11

Communities and Local Government will continue to encourage the adoption of Accessible Housing Registers through, for example, the statutory guidance on CBL which is due to be published in early 2008; and will support the dissemination of good practice models, such as the London-wide AHR.⁹⁵

Guidance on choice-based letting schemes was issued in August 2008 and contained a section on providing choice for disabled people with access needs. The Coalition Government issued new guidance on housing allocations for local authorities in England in June 2012 – most recently updated in January 2023: [Allocation of accommodation: Guidance for local housing authorities in England](#). This replaced all previous guidance and, aside from advising that disabled people with access needs should be afforded “reasonable preference” when allocating social housing, it is silent on the question of accessible housing registers.

The then-Minister, Marcus Jones, responded to a parliamentary question on the merits of keeping up-to-date registers of accessible and suitable social housing on 4 July 2017:

Accessible housing registers can be useful and we are aware that some councils and social landlords have incorporated such an approach within their lettings scheme.

The Government believes it is important that people who require accessible housing are given the right level of priority and that councils and social landlords are able to make the best use of affordable housing in their area.⁹⁶

In May 2021, Habinteg announced it had joined forces with Homefinder UK to pilot a new online accessible housing channel. The pilot is focusing on wheelchair accessible homes within the social housing sector.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ CLG, [Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A National Housing Strategy for housing in an Ageing Society](#), (PDF) February 2008, pp84-5

⁹⁶ [PQ 1086 \[Housing: Construction\], 4 July 2017](#)

⁹⁷ Habinteg, [Developing an online accessible housing channel](#), 21 May 2021

7

DFGs in Wales

As noted earlier, the DFG system in Wales is the same as that in England although the maximum grant is higher at £36,000. There is an Age Cymru factsheet [Obtaining disability equipment and home adaptations in Wales](#) (PDF, July 2021).

In 2018, the Wales Audit Office (WAO) published [a report on Housing Adaptations](#) which called for a review of the DFG means test with the aim of improving timeliness in DFG delivery.⁹⁸ A previous (2015) review of adaptations, [A Review of Independent Living Adaptations \(PDF\)](#), identified similar issues to those in England, including:

- The system is complex and fragmented with different funding streams for different tenures.
- The means test is time-consuming and inequitable.
- There is a lack of information for service users.
- Applicants can experience delays in receiving a DFG.⁹⁹

Subsequently, the Public Accounts Committee undertook an inquiry into the issues raised by the WAO and recommended the Welsh Government review current approaches to the means test, among other proposed reforms.¹⁰⁰

On 10 March 2021, Julie James, Minister for Housing and Local Government in the 2016–21 administration, announced an intention to remove the means test for small and medium DFGs with effect from April 2021. She announced an associated increase in Enable grant from April 2021 to local authorities of £400,000, to bring the total to £4.4 million. She said “This additional grant can be used to meet the capital pressures and address any potential bottlenecks as a result of increased demand.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Wales Audit Office, [Housing Adaptations](#), February 2018

⁹⁹ Shelter Cymru, [A Review of Independent Living Adaptations](#), (PDF) 2015

¹⁰⁰ National Assembly for Wales Public Accounts Committee, [Housing Adaptations: Report of the Public Accounts Committee](#), (PDF) July 2018

¹⁰¹ [Written Statement: Removing the means test on small and medium Disabled Facilities Grants](#), 10 March 2021

8

Scotland

Scotland operates a different scheme of assistance to that in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Financial assistance is available for homeowners where the adaptation is deemed to be essential. A non-means tested grant will cover 80% of the cost of the works. In some cases, eg where the applicant is in receipt of certain benefits, the grant will cover 100% of the cost of the works. There is no upper limit to the cost of the works, but the local authority will check that the proposed cost is reasonable.

The Scottish Government has published a series of guides on the assistance available to residents in different tenures:

[Funding Adaptations to the Home: A Guide for Homeowners](#)

[Funding Adaptations to the Home: A Guide for Local Authority Tenants](#)

[Funding Adaptations to the Home: A Guide for Housing Association Tenants](#)

[Funding Adaptations to the Home: A Guide for Private Tenants](#)

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