

A GUIDE TO SERVICE STANDARDS FOR DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS ASSISTANCE

FACT SHEET

1. What is covered in this fact sheet?

Following the completion of your statement of needs by the Social Care Occupational Therapy Team, which includes your priority banding, your enquiry for a Disabled Facilities Grant has been registered with the Council's Private Sector Housing team. This leaflet will help you to understand the timescales and stages that take place through the grant process and who to contact if you have a query.

2. How long will it take?

This depends on the amount of Government funding the Council receives each year and on the number of enquiries within the system. This varies year on year, but generally, there is a growing demand for assistance to adapt homes.

As a consequence the Council has introduced a priority scoring system to try and target its limited funds at those in greatest need. This means that some clients may be waiting longer for assistance than we would wish.

If you feel that your condition has significantly deteriorated, you may request a re-assessment from the Social Care Team.

3. What happens when I reach the high band?

We will ask you or your agent to obtain plans and / or tenders for the work.

If you are a social housing tenant then your agent will be either your landlord or WHiA. If you are an owner – occupier or private tenant, the Council's in house

agency service will assist you. Or you can arrange to obtain plans and tenders yourself. Please contact us if you wish to consider this option.

Once we have received the plans / specification / tenders, and in accordance with the priority scoring system, we aim to visit you within 14 days to discuss the proposed work, **subject to funding being available**. This visit will be arranged with you in advance, by telephone or letter, by a Senior Private Sector Housing Officer.

Within 21 days after this inspection our Assistance Liaison Officer will arrange a visit to help you to complete the application form and provide the supporting documentation.

Assuming that you have provided us with all the information and documentation we need, we will complete a Formal Test of Resources (based on your income and savings) to determine your financial contribution towards the cost of the work, if any.

If you receive a specified means tested benefit, your grant application will be approved at 100% of the reasonable cost of the work. We may also ask you to obtain a letter from the Department of Works & Pensions to confirm your benefit entitlement.

We aim to approve your grant within 14 days of this formal means test.

If there are delays in processing your grant enquiry we will write to you and let you know.

The Council must manage its grant budget responsibly. Unfortunately, this means that sometimes we may have to delay grant approvals and / or payments to ensure that we remain within budget.

The council is legally able to do this in 2 ways:

- We can hold a *completed* application for up to 6 months before we must approve the grant, and,
- We can also issue a *deferred payment approval* which allows the Council to delay payment of the grant for up to 12 months.

When you have received your grant approval, you can make arrangements with your builder to start work if you have applied by yourself.

If you have an agent helping you, such as WHiA or your social housing landlord, they will usually liaise with the contractor on your behalf to arrange a mutually convenient date for the work to start. Please be aware that your contractor may not be able to start the work as soon as you have received your grant approval as he may be committed to other jobs before yours.

4. What happens when the work is in progress?

If you are having a large adaptation, such as an extension, the team's Improvement Surveyor will make occasional visits as the work is in progress. In all cases we will carry out a final visit to check the completed work and to obtain your written consent to pay the contractor directly. If you are worried about any aspects of the quality of workmanship or finish of the job, please advise your agent or the Council's Improvement Surveyor as soon as possible.

5. How is the grant paid?

The contractor will forward your interim and / or final invoices to Private Sector Housing along with any certificates.

When your grant is finished, we will write to you and let you know that we have made the final payment to your contractor. We will include the original copies of any relevant documents (e.g. electrical certificate).

If you are an owner occupier we will let you know if there is a charge registered against your property on the Local Land Charges Register and, if there is, how much it is for and when the charge will expire.

6. What happens if I have problems after the job has finished?

You can contact the builder directly and ask him to look at the problem for you, or if the issue arises within 12 months of completion, you can contact your agent or the Improvement Surveyor in Private Sector Housing

7. Are there any alternatives to grant aid?

If you wish to fund the adaptation yourself, which would enable you to have the work carried out more quickly, we can assist you by referring you to WHiA, the Council's nominated home improvement agency. WHiA can arrange for plans to be drawn up, if necessary, and for contractors' estimates for the job. They will also monitor the works in progress on your behalf.

Please contact us if you wish to discuss this matter further.

You may also wish to re-consider your housing options, rather than wait for your home to be adapted. WHiA officers can also discuss this with you in confidence, contact them:

Tel: 01925 24909

8. How do I contact you?

When a Council officer visits you they will leave a business card with their contact details.

You can contact us by:

- **Telephone*** - but please be aware that the officer may not be available at the time of your call as they may be visiting other clients at home. However, voicemail is available for most officers and if you wish you can leave your name and contact details, together with a brief message, and we will try to return your call the same day.

If you leave a message after 3.30 pm we will return your call the next working day.

- **Email*** - if your query is simple we will respond the next day otherwise we will write to you within 10 working days.
- **Letter** - if you write to us, we will reply within 10 working days.

Our contact details are on the last page of this fact sheet.

**If the officer you are trying to contact is away from the office for some time, we will advise you when they will return. Details of an alternative contact will*

be on the voicemail message and in an 'out of office' automatically generated email reply.

9. Complaints

If you have a complaint about the service you have received from us, please contact:

Mr David Cowley
Standards and Options Services Manager

housingplus
Private Sector Housing
the Gateway
85 – 101 Sankey Street
Warrington, WA1 1SR

Tel: 01925 246890

Contact details:

Tel: [housingplus](tel:01925246868) reception 01925 246868/01925 246909

Email: privatesector@warrington.gov.uk

You can write to us at:

housingplus
Private Sector Housing
the Gateway
85 – 101 Sankey Street
Warrington WA1 1SR

Private Sector Housing reception is located at:

housingplus
Springfield Street entrance
the GATEWAY

Visit the council's website at: www.warrington.gov.uk

