



Private Housing Health Assistance Policy 2018 – 2022

Draft for Consultation February 2018



Housing Grants, Construction & Regeneration Act 1996

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

1.0 Policy Statement & Aims

1.1 This policy aligns with the council's Vision 2020 of 'Let's Deliver Quality Housing' and embedded within the council's Housing Strategy outcomes to improve and increase provision of specialist accommodation, improve property conditions and promote and increase sustainable living in the City are central to delivering the vision.

1.2 The focus of the private housing health assistance policy is one of prevention and is to enable independent living, by supporting those whose independence may be at risk, to access housing (including their current home) which meets their needs.

This policy sets out how the City of Lincoln Council ("the Council") will for dwellings within its area exercise:-

- (i) its statutory duty for the provision of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants under the provisions of the Housing Grants, Construction & Regeneration Act 1996
- (ii) its discretion to provide flexible assistance to help improve living conditions as determined by the Council in adopting Article 3 of the Regulatory Reform Order (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002.

With the exception of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, all other the assistance which may be provided under this policy is at the discretion of the Council and will subject to the availability of financial resources and how those resources may be directed by the Council's strategic priorities. Consideration will be given when the time has approached, when up to 75% of the available budget has been committed that the statutory demands for the grant monies will supersede discretionary grants. If demand for discretionary assistance exceeds the available budget this assistance will be suspended. In these instances the Council does not undertake to maintain a waiting list.

The Council may charge up to a 15% administration fee for any professional/technical services or charges incurred relating to the work for which the assistance is being sought e.g. obtaining proof of ownership, drawing of plans etc. This fee will be incorporated into the total assistance amount.

This policy will be reviewed every 4 years or sooner, as necessary to take into account changes to legislation, policies or strategies at local or national level.

1.3 The aims of the Private Housing Health Assistance policy are as follows:-

- To provide advice, information and support on repair, maintenance and adaptation of properties across the City.
- To offer a health based framework of assistance to vulnerable groups & households, including those with a long term health condition.
- Whilst it is recognised that it is the home owner's responsibility to maintain their own properties the Council will target limited resources to those that

are most vulnerable or have a health condition and are not able to maintain their own properties which could impact on their independent living.

- Private landlords will not be eligible for any grants under this policy. Landlords have a duty to maintain their properties free from hazards and the Council will exercise their enforcement powers as appropriate to ensure that safe and healthy standards are attained in the private rented sector. In certain circumstances the tenant maybe eligible to apply for a grant under this policy, this will be considered on a case by case basis.
- To contribute to the aims of the *Better Care Fund*, principally to reduce delayed transfers of care, minimise avoidable hospital admission and facilitate early or timely discharge from hospital by tackling housing related matters.
- To facilitate an increase in the number of vulnerable households able to heat their homes at reasonable cost.
- To assist disabled people with adaptations to facilitate their movement in and around their home thereby improving their quality of life.
- In offering assistance the Council will promote relevant services offered by other organisations.
- To treat individuals fairly as required by the Equality Act 2010 and ensure that an individual's rights under Data Protection and human rights legislation are protected.

2.0 Introduction

The suitability of the home is integral to meeting the needs of our residents. A home which enables them to live independently or supports others to provide safe and effective care contributes to the promotion of physical and emotional health and wellbeing and supports a full and active life.

Helping residents to make the right housing choices for their needs and providing support to make the home safe can help reduce hospital admissions or re-admissions, reduce reliance on care and support, improve wellbeing and help maintain independence in the home. One of the ways of doing this is by providing financial assistance to support those choices or adapt the homes of disabled and vulnerable people enabling them to live safely.

This policy explains how the Council will use its resources, where available, to assist residents in need of support to maintain independence in the home, reduce the need for support from social care and health services and/or prevent further deterioration in

their conditions. The assistance may be in the form of a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants or discretionary assistance, which enables the Council to deal with immediate health and safety concerns swiftly and appropriately.

3.0 Legal Framework

The provision of a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs) is regulated by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. This places a statutory duty on the Council to provide grant assistance to qualifying disabled people to undertake a range of adaptations to their homes which are deemed “necessary and appropriate” to meet their needs and it is “reasonable and practicable” to undertake the adaptations having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling. The grant is subject to a means test (except in the case of children) and works must be eligible as defined by the Act and Regulations.

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (“the RRO”) gives the council the power to provide assistance (either directly or indirectly) to any person for the purpose of improving living conditions in the City of Lincoln area provided this is given in accordance with a published policy.

In accordance with the RRO, this policy has been adopted by the Council and includes details of:

- a. The types of assistance the Council may make available
- b. The eligibility conditions for the assistance
- c. The amount of assistance available
- d. The conditions that will apply to the provision of the assistance
- e. The circumstances when repayment may be required

4.0 National Strategic Context

In April 2015 the Government made significant changes to the funding mechanism for disabled facilities grants by making the allocation part of the Better Care Fund (BCF); a pooled budget between the NHS and upper tier councils. The aim of the fund is to provide more joined-up and customer focused services to reduce hospital and care admissions and enable people to return from hospital more quickly.

The Care Act 2014 established a requirement that a needs assessment must be carried out where it appears to the social care authority that a person for whom they may provide or arrange community care services, may be in need of such services. The associated guidance states that the care and support system must actively promote

wellbeing and independence and aim to prevent need, not just wait to respond when people reach a crisis point.

Aligned to this, the NHS 5 Year Forward View (2014) noted that a key condition for transformation across local health economies is a strong primary and out-of-hospital care system, with well-developed planning about how to provide care in people's own homes, with a focus on prevention, promoting independence and support to stay well.

Home adaptations and essential repairs for disabled and vulnerable people support these requirements as they can:

- Enable independence at home
- Speed up hospital discharge/reduce readmission
- Prevent escalation of need e.g. accidents and falls
- Support maintenance of physical and mental well-being

It is clear that home adaptations can contribute to meeting a range of Public Health, NHS and Social Care outcomes. While the housing law relating to the provision of grants for disabled adaptations has not changed, there is scope for local innovation in delivery and opportunities to consider how home adaptations can better support housing, health and social care to achieve improved health and wellbeing outcomes for those with care and support needs.

5.0 National and Local Evidence

- 5.1 Around 30% of people older than 65, and 50% of people older than 80, will fall at least once a year. Up to a quarter of people who fall will sustain a serious injury” - “Falls: assessment and prevention of falls in older people” - June 2013 - National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

In Lincolnshire the population aged over 65 is likely to double by 2037, which would mean nearly 22,000 people could sustain a serious injury as a result of a fall. The human cost of falling includes distress, pain, injury, loss of confidence, loss of independence and mortality. Falling also affects family members and carers. The NICE guidance from June 2013 also tells us that falls are estimated to cost health and social care organisations more than £23.3 billion per year.

In addition, falls are one of the major reasons for people to move from their own home to residential care, again increasing social care costs and impacting on independence. The overall effect of increasing personal wellbeing, preventing accidents and reducing strain on carers means that the cost savings to health and social care of preventing falls are potentially extremely high. A package of relatively low cost adaptations could reduce falls and may delay hospital admissions.

Many chronic health conditions experienced by people, particularly older people, have a causal link to, or are exacerbated by poor housing. Frail and older people experience

poorer physical and mental health and higher risk of mortality, while babies and young children have an increased risk of respiratory problems. The BRE 'Cost of poor housing briefing paper' 2015 estimated that the annual cost to the NHS of treating disease due to cold private housing to be over £850 million. This does not include additional spending by social services, or economic losses through absences from work. Health risks associated with cold homes include; increased respiratory illness, worsening of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, worsening of arthritis, increased blood pressure and risk of heart attacks and stroke. A cold home also increases the risk of falls and accidents as strength and dexterity decreases at lower temperatures. Making homes weather safe, wind and weather proof, alongside ensuring suitable indoor temperatures can be maintained could reduce symptoms or instances of illness.

5.2 Locally the condition of the private housing sector presents a number of challenges and the recent BRE Integrated Dwelling Level Housing Stock Modelling and Database for City of Lincoln Council (updated September 2017) provided the following:-

Headline results for Lincoln

- There are 45,869 dwellings in Lincoln, 49% are owner occupied, 32% private rented and 19% social rented.
- 5,515 dwellings in the private sector have category 1 Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards. This equates to 15% of properties.
- 2,726 dwellings in the private rented sector have category 1 HHSRS hazards. This equates to 18% of properties in the private rented sector.
- The highest concentrations of all HHSRS hazards in the private sector are found in the wards of Park, Carholme and Abbey.
- The highest concentrations of fuel poverty (Low Income High Costs definition) in the private sector are found in the wards of Park, Abbey and Castle and for excess cold the highest concentrations are in Park, Boultham and Carholme.
- The average Simple SAP rating for all private sector dwellings in Lincoln is 61, which is better than both England (60) and East Midlands (58).
- The total cost of mitigating category 1 hazards in Lincoln's private sector stock is estimated to be £12.6 million – with £6.4 million in the owner occupied sector, and £6.2 million in the private rented sector.
- 3.2% (1,180) of *private sector* dwellings and 4.1% (613) of *private rented* dwellings in Lincoln are estimated to have an EPC rating below band E.

6.0 Financing the Policy

The Better Care Fund (BCF) is managed by Lincolnshire County Council. The Council receives a grant annually to provide housing solutions so that residents of the city can manage their own health and wellbeing, and live independently in their communities for as long as possible. The mandatory DFG's will have priority on the BCF monies. In addition to the BCF the Council will exploit all possible opportunities of internal and external funding schemes or to work with other providers to improve housing conditions for the residents of the city.

7.0 Types of Assistance

7.1 Mandatory – Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's)

The Council will continue to provide assistance to those who qualify for a DFG as laid down in legislation. The adaptations funded will be considered as being the most appropriate, reasonable and cost effective way of meeting the assessed needs of the disabled person up to the maximum grant of £30,000.

Where the applicant/disabled person wishes to carry out works to the property which are over and above those assessed by the Occupational Therapist (OT), and the alternative works are defined by the Council as reasonable and practicable and will meet the assessed needs of the disabled person, the Council may offer financial assistance up to the value of the assessed need.

7.2 Discretionary – Housing Assistance Grants (HAG's)

By adopting Article 3 of the RRO it provides greatly flexibility to the Council to provide assistance schemes which help people meet their needs without firstly going through the full DFG process, which can be lengthy and complex. We will for example, provide 'fast track' schemes for adaptations £10,000 or less, which do not require a formal means testing. The proviso to this, is that an application through the above mandatory DFG route is available to the individual if they request it.

Or secondly, considering wider health determinants other than disability, which can be made worse by housing conditions, for example we may consider the health impacts of housing conditions on vulnerable owner occupiers and consider schemes to undertake minor repairs to make homes safe and healthy or other preventative schemes which stop or delay conditions becoming worse.

The provision of assistance other than Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants is subject to the availability of funding. An assessment of each case will be carried out to ensure that the right option for the household is being considered. This may include information about entitlement to benefits, third party funding options e.g. charities, energy efficiency and signposting to other services and agencies.

APPENDIX 1 – INDIVIDUAL SCHEME DETAILS – provides the range of mandatory and discretionary assistance that may be available. Appendix 1 to this policy will be updated as new schemes are agreed or existing schemes are removed.

8.0 Eligibility Criteria and Conditions

- 8.1 In this policy the term “assistance” means any form of financial assistance approved for the purpose of housing renewal, maintenance, improvement or adaptation. “Condition” means any condition attached to any such assistance. Any reference to “owner” or “person responsible” is taken to mean any owner or other person who is responsible for the relevant conditions either singly or jointly. This includes the original person who applied for or received the assistance, as well as any other person who has subsequently become responsible for any condition as a result of acquiring the property or an interest in it.
- 8.2 The specific criteria for each form of assistance are detailed in appendix 1. However, the following conditions will apply in all cases:
- a. Where stated, any financial assistance and related conditions will be secured as a legal charge against the property. A breach of conditions requires the repayment of all or part of the assistance. This charge will not be removed until either the conditions expire or until the assistance is re-paid together with any interest or additional charges that may apply. The Council may demand that any grant which has been paid be repaid forthwith, together with interest from the date on which it was paid until repayment, at such a reasonable rate as the Council may determine, but generally within a twelve months.
 - b. A charge against the property is binding on any person who is at the time being an owner of the premises concerned. Where a condition is broken, the Council has the usual powers and remedies in law to enforce the charge and secure payment of any amount due.
 - c. Where any condition is in force, the Council may require the responsible person to provide any information to satisfy the Council that the condition is being complied with. The Council can require this information in writing or in other reasonable form. It is a condition that this information is provided in the form required within a reasonable timescale as specified by the Council and as fully, accurately and honestly as reasonably practicable. Failure to comply with this requirement is a breach of conditions in itself and the assistance, or part of the assistance where specified, must be re-paid to the Council.
 - d. It is for the person responsible for complying with any condition to demonstrate to the Council’s satisfaction that the condition is being complied with. Failure to do so will be treated as failure to comply with the condition. The Council does not have the burden of having to prove that the condition is not being complied with.

- e. Conditions will be enforced in all cases, unless there is accepted exceptional circumstances which will be considered on a case by case basis. Money repaid or recovered will be recycled back into the private housing health assistance programme.
- f. The approval of assistance does not give or imply the Council's approval of any other consent that may be required, such as planning permission or building regulation consent. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain any such consent as may be required.

8.3 Any person making an application for assistance must:

- a. Be over the age of 18 years on the date of application
- b. Live in the dwelling which is subject to the application as their sole main residence
- c. Live within the City of Lincoln.

8.4 Persons will not be eligible for assistance in the following circumstances:

- a. Where ownership of the dwelling is disputed
- b. Where the owner of the property has a statutory duty to undertake the necessary works to the dwelling and it is reasonable for them to do so.
- c. Where the proposed works would normally be covered by buildings insurance. If before a grant is approved it is found that the applicant has submitted an insurance claim, the insurance company will be asked to confirm in writing the extent of the claim and their liability, if any. The value of any housing assistance will be reduced by the amount equivalent to the insurance company's liability.
- d. Where works have started before the formal approval of an application, except where in exceptional circumstances a defect may present a serious risk to health and safety.
- e. Where the proposed works are to repair any shed or outbuildings.
- f. Incomplete applications or applications lacking sufficient information will be refused.

8.5 All cases will be considered on a case by case basis. Incomplete applications or applications lacking sufficient information will be refused.

8.6 Enquiries about how the policy is operated should be referred to the Private Housing Team Leader in the first instance. Appeals must be made in writing and detail the specific grounds on which the appeal is based, the relevant Assistant Director will make the final decision.

9.0 Making an Application and Payment of Assistance

Applications must be made in writing on the appropriate form and must include original documentation where requested. An application will only be considered complete once all of the relevant documentation has been provided.

The Council may charge up to a 15% administration fee for any professional/technical services or charges incurred relating to the work for which the assistance is being sought e.g. obtaining proof of ownership, drawing of plans etc. This fee will be incorporated into the total assistance amount.

The Council will make arrangements for contractors to undertake works, however, the contract agreement is between the applicant and contractor; the Council will not be liable for disputes arising between the parties. If the applicant elects to use their own contractor they must submit at least 2 written quotations from different contractors. The Council will evaluate each of the quotations taking into account price, quality and timescales for delivery to advise the applicant which contractor is preferred.

For larger and more complex grant applications such as, extensions, the Council may appoint an agent to manage the grant works, this is at the discretion of the Council. Having exercised this discretion the applicant will have to engage directly with the agent in order to complete the grant works.

In the event of any disputes between the applicant and the contractor the Council will help to resolve these, unless an agent has been appointed, in which case the agent will help to resolve these. However should this not be possible it may be necessary for the applicant to seek legal advice to remedy any dispute.

The Council will arrange for grant payments to be made directly to contractors upon completion of works.

10.0 Maintenance and Repair

The quality of work undertaken by contractors appointed by the Council is guaranteed for a period of 12 months. Some of the individual items may have their own extended warranties that are provided by the manufacturer. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that they adhere to all conditions of a warranty and/or servicing. Any extended warranties are applied for in accordance with the manufacturer's guarantee. Copies of guarantees/warranties will be provided to the applicant after completion of the works.

The Council is not responsible for the ongoing maintenance or repair of any items.

11.0 Repayment where applicant not entitled to grant

Where an application for a grant is approved but it subsequently appears to the Council that the applicant was not, at the time the application was approved, entitled to a grant of that description, the Council may demand that any grant which has been paid be repaid forthwith, together with interest from the date on which it was paid until repayment, at such reasonable rate as the Council may determine, but generally within a twelve months.

12.0 Data Protection

All data will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR).

The Council may investigate or formally verify any of the information provided in connection with any application for assistance.

In order to progress an application it may be necessary to share information provided with internally with other services or other organisations that may assist with the grant process. These may include:

- City of Lincoln Council – Revenues & Benefits, Planning & Building Control
- Lincolnshire County Council – Adult Social Care or Children’s Services
- Lincolnshire Home Independence Agency or other Agencies appointed by applicants
- Relevant Government Departments

The Council is under a duty to protect public funds and may use the information provided for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies administering public funds solely for these purposes.

The above information will need to be communicated with applicants at the time their personal information is obtained in the form of a Privacy Notice. This is necessary to comply with individual’s ‘Right to be Informed’ in accordance with GDPR.

Safeguards will ensure the security of the data and will comply with Article (1) (f) of the GDPR.

APPENDIX 1 – Individual Scheme Details - February 2018

Table 1 – Summary of Scheme

Type of assistance	Means Test	Local Land Charge	Mandatory/ Discretionary	Key Outcome	Max. Funding
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	Y	Y	Mandatory	Adaptations to enable independent living	£30,000
DFG top-up	Y	Y	Discretionary	Top up of mandatory DFG which exceeds grant limit	£10,000
Disabled Adaptation Assistance Fast – track adaptations	N	Y	Discretionary	Minor adaptations for those eligible for a DFG without means testing	£10,000
Moving on Assistance	Y	Y	Discretionary	Financial assistance to move to more suitable accommodation	£10,000
Hospital Discharge Assistance	N	Y	Discretionary	Prevent delayed transfers of care associated with housing disrepair or access issues	£10,000
Safe, Warm and Well	Y	Y	Discretionary	Minor essential repairs to make homes safe for vulnerable owner occupiers	£10,000
Gas Central Heating Scheme	Y	N	Discretionary	To provide a gas central heating system of suitable design and installation for owner occupiers who are either vulnerable or suffer a health condition exacerbated by cold.	£8,000
Emergency Housing Grant Scheme (Winter)	Y	N	Discretionary	To enable owner occupiers to manage the immediate repairs which are giving rise to conditions which directly impact upon health.	£2,000

Type of assistance	Means Test	Local Land Charge	Mandatory/ Discretionary	Key Outcome	Max. Funding
Dementia Aids and Adaptations	N	N	Discretionary	Enable people with a diagnosis of dementia to manage their surroundings and retain their independence.	£750
Sanctuary Scheme	N	N	Discretionary	This assistance will provide an occupier who are at risk of domestic abuse to improve the security arrangements of their home.	£400

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1. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants

Purpose: Local housing authorities have a statutory duty to provide grant aid to disabled people to undertake a range of adaptations to their homes.

Mandatory disabled facilities grants will be administered in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. The following provides a summary of these provisions, but should be read in conjunction with the full Act.

Maximum amount: The maximum amount is £30,000.

Applicant eligibility: All applicants must be eligible under the Act. Applications must be supported by a recommendation from an Occupational Therapist confirming that the person is disabled for the purposes of the Act and that the proposed works are necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled person.

Eligible works: The relevant works must be necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled occupant and it must be reasonable and practicable to carry out the works having regard to the age and condition of the property. The purposes for which a grant must be given are detailed in section 23 of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. Any associated fees e.g. technical surveys, obtaining proof of title etc. will be included in the total assistance amount.

Financial assessment: The grant is subject to a formal means test in accordance with the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996, to determine the customer's contribution towards the cost of the works. The maximum grant including any contribution must not exceed £30,000.

Application: Applications must be made on the relevant form and supported by a referral from an Occupational Therapist. The Council will consult the Social Services Authority on all applications.

Applications may be made by owner occupiers, private tenants and Registered Providers of Social Housing (excluding City of Lincoln Council Tenants – who may be eligible separately for an aids and adaptations works via the Council as their landlord). In the case of tenants, the landlord may make an application on their behalf.

The Council will normally appoint a contractor, however, where the applicant chooses to use their own contractor, a minimum of two estimates must be submitted with the application.

Works must not commence until formal approval of the grant has been received by the applicant.

Payment:

Payment will be made directly to the contractor upon satisfactory completion of the eligible works and approval of invoices. In some instances payments may be made in instalments and the balance (no less than 10% of the total cost of the eligible works) paid on satisfactory completion.

The applicant must agree and sign that they are satisfied with the quality of the work prior to payment. If the applicant refuses, the Council will inspect the work and if it believes it is of sufficiently good standard the payment will be made.

Conditions:

Written consent from owner(s) of property must be obtained prior to works commencing.

The Council may remove items of equipment e.g. modular ramps and stair lifts from the property for re-use when they are no longer required by the disabled person. This will be considered on a case by case basis dependent on the age and condition of the item. Where the items are not considered appropriate for re-use it will be the responsibility of the householder/property owner to remove any items at their own cost.

Where the Council provides funding in excess of £5,000 that creates additional living space e.g. an extension or conversion of a garage or outbuilding, and where the applicant has an owner's interest in the property, this will be registered as a local land charge against the adapted property, subject to a maximum of £10,000. If the property is disposed of within 10 years of the completion of the works (as determined by the Council), re-payment of the amount will be required.

The Council will not pay for any additional works carried out without prior approval.

All works must be completed within 12 months of approval.

2. Top Up of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant

Purpose: To provide discretionary financial assistance to a disabled person who qualifies for a mandatory disabled facilities grant where the cost of the eligible works exceeds the mandatory grant maximum of £30,000.

Maximum amount: The maximum top up is £10,000.

Applicant eligibility: Applicants must have an owner's interest in the property and the disabled person (if different) must qualify for a mandatory disabled facilities grant where the value of the eligible works (including the client contribution and any fees if applicable) exceeds the mandatory grant maximum. However, Applicants who are in receipt of the discretionary 'Moving on assistance' grant will not be eligible for this grant.

Eligible works: Works funded by the top up must be eligible works which are necessary and appropriate to meet the disabled person's needs as defined by the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

Financial assessment: The top up will be subject to a formal means test using the prescribed test of resources applicable to mandatory disabled facilities grants. Where the disabled person is a child, the parents/guardians will be means tested.

Applications: Applications will be considered alongside an application for a mandatory disabled facilities grant.

Payment: The discretionary top up will be paid as an additional amount to the mandatory disabled facilities grant under the same payment conditions.

Conditions: The amount of the discretionary top up will be secured by attaching a local land charge on the adapted property. If the property is disposed of within 10 years of the completion of the works (as determined by the Council), re-payment of the amount will be required.

Works must not commence until formal approval of the discretionary assistance and mandatory grant have been received by the applicant.

3. Discretionary Disabled Adaptations Assistance

- Purpose:** To provide discretionary financial assistance for disabled occupants who do not have the financial resources to pay for necessary adaptations to help support them to remain independent in their home. The discretionary assistance will fund minor works for those eligible for a mandatory disabled facilities grant.
- Maximum amount:** The maximum amount of assistance is £10,000.
- Applicant eligibility:** The disabled occupant must be eligible under the provisions of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. Applications must be supported by a referral from a Lincolnshire County Council Occupational Therapist.
- Eligible works:** The relevant works must be necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled occupant and it must be reasonable and practicable to carry out the works having regard to the age and condition of the property. The purposes for which a grant may be given are those detailed in section 23 of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. Any associated fees e.g. technical surveys, obtaining proof of title etc. will be included in the total assistance amount.
- Financial assessment:** There will be no formal means testing. The following criteria will be applied:-
- Less than £16,000 capital, savings and investments
 - Then either for single income no more than £13,400 per annum
 - Couple with or without children and single with children then income for customer and partner combined of no more than £20,000 per annum
- The applicant will self-declare income & saving levels.
- Payment:** Payment will be made directly to the contractor upon satisfactory completion of the eligible works and approval of invoices. The applicant must agree and sign that they are satisfied with the quality of the work prior to payment. If the applicant refuses, the Council will inspect the

work and if it believes it is of sufficiently good standard the payment will be made.

Conditions:

Written consent from owner(s) of property must be obtained prior to works commencing.

The applicant will self-declare income & saving levels.

The Council may remove items of equipment e.g. modular ramps and stair lifts from the property when they are no longer required by the disabled person for re-use. This will be considered on a case by case basis dependent on the age and condition of the item. Where the items are not considered appropriate for re-use it will be the responsibility of the householder/property owner to remove any such items at their own cost.

Only one application for discretionary assistance will be considered in any 12 month period (taken from date of approval).

Where the applicant has an owner's interest in the property, the amount of the discretionary funding will be secured by attaching a local land charge on the adapted property. If the property is disposed of within 10 years of the completion of the works (as determined by the Council), repayment of the amount will be required. This will be reduced by 10% for each complete year.

The Council will not pay for any additional works carried out without prior approval.

Where the discretionary funding is no longer available, applications will be considered under the provisions of a mandatory disabled facilities grant.

4. Moving on Assistance

- Purpose:** This discretionary assistance enables disabled people who would be eligible for a mandatory disabled facilities grant to move to more suitable accommodation, where it is considered more appropriate than providing funding through a mandatory disabled facilities grant to adapt their existing home.
- Maximum amount:** The maximum amount is £10,000 and may be used in conjunction with a mandatory disabled facilities grant to undertake eligible works to the new property.
- Applicant eligibility:** Any disabled person who would be eligible for adaptation works under a mandatory disabled facilities grant
- Qualifying criteria:** A referral for adaptation of the existing property must have been received from an Occupational Therapist.
- In the Council's opinion, the existing property must be unsuitable for adaptation, in that it is not reasonably and practicably capable of being adapted to meet the needs of the disabled person.
- The applicant must have or propose to have an owner's interest in new property. The existing and new properties must be within City of Lincoln Council's area, and be the permanent, main residence of the disabled occupant.
- In the opinion of the Council and in conjunction with the Occupational Therapist, the new property must be considered suitable for the needs of the disabled person or must be reasonably and practicably capable of being adapted to meet the needs of the disabled person.
- The assistance can be used for the following eligible costs:
- Legal and ancillary fees
 - Estate agent fees
 - Removal costs
- Financial assessment:** The assistance is subject to the prescribed test of resources applicable to mandatory disabled facilities grants. Where the disabled person is a child, the parents/legal guardians will be means tested.

Payment: Payment will be made to the applicant's solicitor on exchange of contract so that funding is available for completion. Evidence of the fees will be required prior to payment.

Conditions: This discretionary assistance may only be awarded once.

Where an award has been made under this policy and prior to the exchange of contracts and the disabled person is no longer able to relocate to the new property e.g. they have moved into permanent care or deceased, the Council may decide to pay all, some or none of the assistance.

The amount of the discretionary funding will be secured by attaching a local land charge on the new property. If the property is disposed of within 10 years of the completion of the purchase (as determined by the Council), re-payment of the amount will be required.

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5. Hospital Discharge Assistance

- Purpose:** This assistance is for people in hospital whose discharge is delayed due to the condition of their home. The assistance may fund urgent adaptations that allow access in and around the person's home by providing stair lifts or ramps. Other minor works which are needed to facilitate their discharge from hospital will also be considered e.g. one off clearance of hoarded properties and works to heating systems.
- Maximum amount:** The maximum grant is £10,000
- Applicant eligibility:** The applicant must be in hospital and their discharge delayed.
- The application must be accompanied by a referral from a hospital Occupational Therapist or other suitably qualified professional confirming the urgent works that are required to the home to enable discharge.
- The property subject to the application must normally be occupied by the applicant on a permanent basis.
- Eligible works:** Eligible works can include, but not exclusively and works will be determined on a case by case basis which will facilitate the hospital discharge:
- Stair lifts
 - Ramps and door widening to the essential doorways
 - Heating repairs or improvements
 - Clearance and one off deep clean of hoarded goods
- Financial assessment:** This assistance is not subject to a means test.
- Payment:** The Council will appoint contractors to undertake the work and will pay them directly on production of satisfactory invoices. The applicant must agree and sign that they are satisfied with the quality of the work prior to payment. If the applicant refuses, the Council will inspect the work and if it believes it is of sufficiently good standard the payment will be made.

Conditions: Written consent from owner(s) of property should be obtained prior to works commencing, however if no structural works are being undertaken this will not be necessary, e.g. cleaning a property.

If the cost of the works exceeds the maximum financial assistance the Council will liaise with the Occupational Therapist and/or relevant professionals to determine the priority works.

The Council will not pay for any additional works carried out without prior approval.

Where the applicant has an owner's interest in the property, the amount of the discretionary funding will be secured by attaching a local land charge on the adapted property. If the property is disposed of within 10 years of the completion of the works (as determined by the Council), repayment of the amount will be required. This will be reduced by 10% for each complete year.

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6. Safe, Warm and Well

Purpose: This assistance is for owner occupiers over the age of 65, or those with chronic or severe health conditions affected by poor housing conditions who need to undertake essential repairs to their home in order to remain safe and healthy.

Maximum amount: The maximum amount is £10,000.

Applicant eligibility: The applicant must be an owner occupier or private tenant with a full repairing responsibility.

The applicant or a family member living with them must be an occupier over the age of 65 or have a chronic or severe condition exacerbated by the cold or poor housing conditions. Evidence of the condition will be required e.g. letter/referral from a General Practitioner or other relevant health professional. Examples of relevant conditions include:

- Arthritis (osteo and rheumatoid, requiring regular treatment and review)
- Cardiovascular disease (for example heart disease or stroke)
- Respiratory disease (for example chronic bronchitis, severe asthma, emphysema or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)

Eligible works: Essential repairs are determined as a Category 1 (serious) or significant Category 2 (other) hazards as determined by the Housing Act 2004, which affects the ability of the property to be safe, wind and weather proof. Examples of works may include:

- Heating repairs or replacement
- Works to prevent falls
- Roof repairs

Any associated fees e.g. technical surveys, obtaining proof of title etc. will be included in the total assistance amount.

All properties will be subject to inspection and assessment by the Council or its agent.

Financial assessment: There will be no formal means testing. The following criteria will be applied:-
Less than £16,000 capital, savings and investments

Then either for single income no more than £13,400 per annum

Couple with or without children and single with children then income for customer and partner combined of no more than £20,000 per annum

The applicant will self-declare income & saving levels.

Payment:

The Council will appoint a contractor to undertake the eligible works. Payment will be made directly to the contractor upon satisfactory completion of the eligible works and approval of invoices. The applicant must agree and sign that they are satisfied with the quality of the work prior to payment. If the applicant refuses, the Council will inspect the work and if it believes it is of sufficiently good standard the payment will be made.

Conditions:

The applicant must have lived in the property for a minimum of 12 months as their main residence. Written consent from owner(s) of property must be obtained prior to works commencing.

The applicant will self-declare income & saving levels.

Only one application for assistance will be considered within any 3 year period (further applications may be considered at the discretion of the Service Manager, Environmental Health in exceptional circumstances).

The Council will not consider applications in respect of dwellings which have been built or converted less than 10 years from the date of application.

Where works beyond the maximum assistance value are identified, the assistance will be prioritised based upon the hazard score and circumstances of the applicant. Works must be reasonable and practicable having regard to the age and condition of the property.

The amount of the discretionary funding will be secured by attaching a local land charge on the new property. If the property is disposed of within 10 years of the completion of the works (as determined by the Council), re-payment of the amount will be required.

The Council will not pay for any additional works carried out without prior approval.

7. Gas Central Heating Scheme

Purpose: The scheme will provide a Gas Central heating system of suitable design and installation a homeowner with vulnerable occupiers, where previously there has been no such system, or where the existing system, in the opinion of the contractor/surveyor, cannot be effectively repaired at reasonable cost or where it has been condemned by a suitable competent person.

Maximum amount: The maximum amount is £8,000.

Applicant eligibility: The applicant must be an owner occupier. The property must have an EPC rating of D or below and have an existing working gas supply.

The applicant must be over the age of 65 or the property have children 14 years or under or have an occupier with a chronic or severe condition exacerbated by the cold or poor housing conditions. Declaration of the condition will be required. Examples of relevant conditions include:

- Arthritis (osteo and rheumatoid, requiring regular treatment and review)
- Cardiovascular disease (for example heart disease or stroke)
- Respiratory disease (for example chronic bronchitis, severe asthma, emphysema or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)

Eligible works: Due to the possible vulnerable nature of the recipients of the scheme it is proposed that the scheme will be a one stop shop that caters for but not limited to:

- Design and Installation and first annual service of a whole house Gas Central Heating System to meet the needs of the home owner/occupier
- Associated electrical check and upgrade to comply with Building Regulations and Manufacturer's instructions
- Associated building work/Access as required
- Where necessary the Moving/Storage of furniture, removal and relaying of carpets
- Where disturbed the making good of internal decoration in line with the works carried out

No alternative to a gas fueled Central Heating system will be considered.

Any associated fees e.g. technical surveys, obtaining proof of title etc. will be included in the total assistance amount.

All properties will be subject to inspection and assessment by the Council or its agent.

Financial
assessment:

There will be no formal means testing. The following criteria will be applied:-

Less than £16,000 capital, savings and investments

Then either for single income no more than £13,400 per annum

Couple with or without children and single with children then income for customer and partner combined of no more than £20,000 per annum

The applicant will self-declare income & saving levels.

Payment:

The Council will appoint a contractor to undertake the eligible works. Payment will be made directly to the contractor upon satisfactory completion of the eligible works and approval of invoices. The applicant must agree and sign that they are satisfied with the quality of the work prior to payment. If the applicant refuses, the Council will inspect the work and if it believes it is of sufficiently good standard the payment will be made.

Conditions:

The applicant must have lived in the property for a minimum of 12 months as their main residence.

The applicant will self-declare income & saving levels.

Owner's written consent for the works to be carried out at the property will be obtained prior to works commencing on site

The Council will not pay for any additional works carried out without prior approval.

8. Emergency Housing Grant Scheme (Winter)

- Purpose:** This assistance will provide immediate assistance to owner occupiers where works are needed to make the dwelling wind and weatherproof or to reduce a hazard.
- Maximum amount:** The maximum funding is £2,000, except for houseboats and caravans where the limit is £750
- Applicant eligibility:** The applicant shall have an “owner’s interest” in the dwelling subject to the application, unless they are a lifelong tenant.
No application will be considered where the applicant has lived in and owned the dwelling for a period of less than 5 years from the day of the application. However, where the applicant’s circumstances have changed since acquiring the dwelling then the Council may decide to set aside the 5 year requirement in cases of hardship.
- Eligible works:** Works eligible for assistance will be at the discretion of the council. As a general condition the works should help remedy defects or deficiencies which have a direct impact upon health. The purpose of the works will be to secure an immediate remedy and not necessarily for reducing long term maintenance costs. Building regulation or legitimate project management fees may be included (within the grant maximum).
- Financial assessment:** Grant aid is targeted to people who cannot afford to repair their own homes. There will be no formal means testing.
- Payment:** The Council will appoint a contractor or work with a third party to undertake the eligible works. One estimate of the cost of the works is required. Payment will be made directly to the contractor upon satisfactory completion of the eligible works and approval of invoices.
- Conditions:** It must be reasonable and practicable to undertake the works.
- No requirement is made for the written consent of all joint owners as a condition of grant approval.
- The applicant is not required to enter into a deed agreement with the Council.

There are no grant conditions concerning future occupation and repayment.

If the owner disposes of the property after the completion of the works there is no obligation to repay the grant.

Where an applicant makes more than one application for a grant in respect of the same dwelling then it will not be accepted unless the period between the completion of the previous grant and the application for the succeeding grant is at least 9 months.

No more than 2 applications will be accepted from the same applicant in respect of one address in any 5 year period.

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9. Dementia Aids and Adaptations

- Purpose:** This assistance will provide aids and adaptations in the home designed to enable people with a diagnosis of dementia to manage their surroundings and retain their independence.
- Maximum amount:** The maximum funding is £750
- Applicant eligibility:** Applicants must be owner occupiers or private tenants with a clinical diagnosis of dementia and referred by a General Practitioner, Dementia Support worker or other relevant health professional, confirming the works which are necessary and appropriate to support them to retain their independence.
- Eligible works:** The Council will work with the relevant health professional to determine appropriate works on a case by case basis. This may include: contrasting coloured hand rails, thermostatic taps, lighting and door signage etc.
- Financial assessment:** This assistance is not subject to a means test
- Payment:** The Council will appoint a contractor or work with a third party to undertake the eligible works. Payment will be made directly to the contractor upon satisfactory completion of the eligible works and approval of invoices.
- Conditions:** It must be reasonable and practicable to undertake the works.
- All works must relate to the applicants dementia needs and assist them to remain in their home independently for a longer period.
- Only one application will be considered within any 3 year period.

10. Sanctuary Scheme

- Purpose:** This assistance will provide an occupier who are at risk of domestic abuse to improve the security arrangements of their home.
- Maximum amount:** The maximum funding is up to £400
- Applicant eligibility:** Where an appropriate officer of the Council is satisfied that one or more persons has suffered from, or is threatened by domestic abuse.
- Eligible works:** The assistance provided will be in the form of security measures, such as, door and window locks, security lighting
- Financial assessment:** This assistance is not subject to a means test.
- Payment:** The Council will appoint a contractor or work with a third party to undertake the eligible works. Payment will be made directly to the contractor upon satisfactory completion of the eligible works and approval of invoices.
- Conditions:** It must be reasonable and practicable to undertake the works.