

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 13 October 2021
Report Subject	Disabled Facilities Grant Policy
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing & Assets)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 places a mandatory duty on Local Authorities to provide disabled facilities grants. The grant is available for adapting or providing facilities for a disabled persons in a dwelling.

As part of the Internal Audit review of the Disabled Facilities Grant service in June 2018, it was identified that the current policy required a review in order to make the process and detail clearer and easier to understand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee notes the report and provide any observations on the revised policy and new discretionary grant.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT POLICY
1.01	A Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) is a mandatory grant to help individuals living with a disability with financial support towards the cost of adapting their homes to enable them to continue living at their home with the maximum amount of independence.

	The administration of DFG is carried out within the Housing and Asset portfolio following a referral from an Occupational Therapist once the appropriate considerations have determined that the best option for the individual is to have an adaptation to the property they live in.
1.02	A DFG is available to owner occupiers, private tenants, Local Authority tenants and for tenants in social housing with registered social landlords. In these cases the tenant is required to request any adaptations directly with their landlord.
1.03	The maximum amount of grant available in Wales is £36,000 per application within a 5 year period. However, applications can be made within this period if the customers condition has changed, this case would then be reviewed with the Occupational Therapist upon application.
1.04	Where the application is for a child, or the applicant is in receipt of certain qualifying benefits, there is no means test and the cost of the adaptation up to the maximum grant will generally be awarded.
1.05	Where the application is for an adaptation under £10,000, these medium sized cases will no longer require a means test in line with the revised Welsh Government Housing Adaptations Service Standards.
1.06	For other applications the amount of the grant will vary from zero to the maximum grant depending on the cost of the approved works and the financial circumstances of the applicant. A means test will be carried out to establish, based on the financial circumstances of the applicant, whether the applicant will be required to make a financial contribution to the adaptation costs.
1.07	The Welsh Government Housing Adaptations Service Standards (revised March 2021) provides all Local Authorities with the guidance on the level of service expected including adaptation categories, timeframes and performance measures.
1.08	The policy was last reviewed and approved in October 2019; however it has since been identified that current practices in operation within the service are not aligned to the current policy and adherence would further delay the delivery of the required adaptations to our customers.
1.09	Work has been ongoing since then to identify and implement process improvements to further expedite delivery and recommendations for a policy exemption were put forward and approved in September 2020. The approved changes have been incorporated into the revised policy and they include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilisation of Local Land Charges as opposed to Legal Charges to be utilised for all Discretionary Top up Grants. • Discretionary Top up Grant amount increased from £20,000 to £26,000. • Remove the need, for the equity to be available as part of the criteria for the Discretionary Top up Grant Loan.

1.10	A significant amount of work has also been carried out to ensure that our customers, and the professionals who support them, have all the relevant information at the earliest opportunity. This work is now reflected in the revised policy and related appendices that are appended to this report.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a direct result of this report.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT																
3.01	<p>Under the five delivery principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act the revised Disabled Facilities Grant Policy can have the following impacts:</p> <p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td>Positive impact on longer term solutions to enable people living with disabilities to remain in their own home for longer.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td>Positive - Enabling the grant will have a significant positive preventative impacts for people.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> <td>Positive- The Grants policy and the wider best practice group that reviews and aligns best practice is a positive example of integration across sectors.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collaboration</td> <td>Positive - As above.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Involvement</td> <td>Positive - The policy has been through a consultation process and user/customer satisfaction will be built into processes to ensure user involvement in shaping improvements to service.</td> </tr> </table> <p>Well-being Goals Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Prosperous Wales</td> <td>No Impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resilient Wales</td> <td>No Impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Healthier Wales</td> <td>Positive - The Disabled Facilities Grants are there to support people living with disabilities to be in a position to live safely</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	Positive impact on longer term solutions to enable people living with disabilities to remain in their own home for longer.	Prevention	Positive - Enabling the grant will have a significant positive preventative impacts for people.	Integration	Positive- The Grants policy and the wider best practice group that reviews and aligns best practice is a positive example of integration across sectors.	Collaboration	Positive - As above.	Involvement	Positive - The policy has been through a consultation process and user/customer satisfaction will be built into processes to ensure user involvement in shaping improvements to service.	Prosperous Wales	No Impact	Resilient Wales	No Impact	Healthier Wales	Positive - The Disabled Facilities Grants are there to support people living with disabilities to be in a position to live safely
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		and more comfortably in their own home for longer. The revised policy sets out the process for disabled facilities grant in a clear and easy to understand way.
	More equal Wales	Positive - By supporting people living with disabilities to live more comfortably and safely in their own homes will also contribute to enabling them to fulfil their potential no matter what their background.
	Cohesive Wales	No Impact
	Vibrant Wales	No Impact
	Globally responsible Wales	No Impact
	<p>The revision of the Disabled Facilities Grants Policy, when implemented will contribute to the Council's Well-being objective of 'Caring Council' through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of appropriate interventions (i.e. support or adaptations) to assist people to remain in their homes wherever possible 	

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Review and initial consultation with an Officer Working Group undertaken to review and revise the previous policy.
4.02	The Policy was presented to the Community and Housing Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who were supportive of the revised policy.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Revised Disabled Facilities Grant Policy
5.02	Appendix 2 – Revised Housing Standards

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Integrated Impact Assessment

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Jen Griffiths, Benefits Manager Telephone: 01352 702929 E-mail: jen.griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) – A statutory grant of up to £36,000 to help individuals living with a disability with the cost of adapting their homes to enable them to continue living at their residence with the maximum amount of independence.