



Conwy County Borough Council

Adaptations Policy

February 2024



Purpose of the policy

An adaptation is an alteration or piece of equipment which makes it easier and safer for a person with a disability to stay in their home. Adaptations can vary from simple items such as a grab rail, assistance with getting into or out of a bath, or in appropriate cases, small extensions.

A suitable, well-adapted home can make the difference to someone's ability to live safely and independently.

This policy sets out how adaptations are funded and how the application process works.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the Conwy County Borough Council Housing Renewal Policies May 2023 which set out the other forms of assistance offered to eligible homeowners and private tenants in the Conwy county.

Legislation

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 is the legal framework governing the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). Local Authorities have a statutory duty to provide grant aid to assist qualifying homeowners and tenants with adaptations to enable them to live in their home safely and as independently as possible.

In 2002, the introduction of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 made significant changes to the grants regime, and provided flexibility to Local Authorities to develop forms of assistance which would best meet local priorities and need.

Types of assistance offered under this policy

Section 1 - Disabled Facilities Grant

Disabled Facilities Grant is a mandatory grant set out in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, and amended by Schedule 3 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.

The type of adaptations that can be funded by DFG include, but are not limited to:

- i) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to and from the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or caravan
- ii) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to a room used or usable as the principal family room;
- iii) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room used or usable for sleeping;
- iv) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a lavatory, or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility;
- v) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a bath or shower (or both), or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility;
- vi) Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled occupant;
- vii) Facilitating access and movement by the disabled occupant around the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or caravan in order to enable him to care for a person who is normally resident there and is in need of such care;

The maximum grant amount for DFG is set in legislation and is currently £36,000.

Other linked works

In some specific circumstances it may be necessary to undertake other works to a property which are needed in order to ensure the safety and compliance of works undertaken as part of a Disabled Facilities Grant. Where such works are considered by the Authority to be essential, these will also be funded under these policies.

Section 2 - Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance

Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance is a discretionary grant which can be used to fund works:

- i) which are not eligible for Disabled Facilities Grant but are deemed necessary to ensure that the adaptation works fully meet the needs of the disabled person, or
- ii) to provide a “top-up” to a mandatory DFG where the cost of the eligible adaptation work is higher than the statutory limit.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- providing a safe play area for a child
- providing specialist treatment facilities
- adaptations to allow a disabled occupant to work from home

Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance can also be awarded to meet the cost of extending the manufacturer’s warranty on all types of equipment covered by the Authority’s maintenance contract relating to the purchase and maintenance of stair-lifts, step-lifts and hoists. This provision also applies to all types of equipment referred to in the maintenance contract, even where the equipment concerned has not actually been provided under the contract (and where no maintenance contract is in place with the contractor who installed the equipment). The manufacturer’s warranty period (usually one year), when added to the extended warranty period (usually four years) will be equal to the financial assistance condition period.

In circumstances where equipment covered by the above maintenance contract is removed from a property, the Authority will, at its discretion, cover the cost of the reinstatement of the structure of the building. Cosmetic reinstatement will not be considered under Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance.

Any equipment funded through Disabled Facilities Grant or Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance belongs to the person to whom the grant is awarded. As a result, when any manufacturer’s warranty has expired, all subsequent ongoing maintenance and repair will be the responsibility of that person.

In the event that equipment supplied under this section is no longer required, the applicant or a family member can donate the equipment back to the authority to secure its re-use elsewhere. Where equipment is removed, the Council will meet the reasonable cost of removal and any resulting structural reinstatement.

Section 3 – Enable Funding

Funded by Welsh Government, Enable is a fast track discretionary grant which can be awarded to provide small or medium adaptations to facilitate hospital discharge, or enable an applicant to remain living independently in their own home. Medium adaptations must be recommended by an Occupational Therapist (or trusted assessor) employed either by the Council or Health Authority.

Applications for Enable grants are not means-tested.

Eligible works

Enable funding can be used to fund works such as stairlifts, steplifts, hoists, handrails, bathroom adaptations or ramps. Other works may also be considered at the discretion of the Housing Improvements Team.

In the case of private tenants, the property owner (landlord) must consent to the works being carried out.

Any equipment provided through an Enable grant belongs to the person to whom the grant has been awarded. As a result, when any manufacturer's warranty has expired, all subsequent maintenance of, or repair costs for the equipment will be the responsibility of that person.

Enable funding can also be used to meet the cost of extending the manufacturer's warranty on all types of equipment covered by the Council's maintenance contract relating to the purchase and maintenance of stair-lifts, step-lifts and hoists. This provision also applies to all types of equipment referred to in the maintenance contract, even where the equipment concerned has not actually been provided under the contract (and where no maintenance contract is in place with the contractor who installed the equipment).

In circumstances where equipment covered by the above maintenance contract is removed from a property, the Authority will, at its discretion, cover the cost of the reinstatement of the structure of the building. Cosmetic reinstatement will not be considered under Enable.

Section 4 - Assessing the applicant's ability to contribute towards the cost of an adaptation which is funded by DFG or Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance

From the date of adoption of this policy, small and medium cost adaptations (howsoever funded) will no longer be subject to a test of resources. However, the test of resources (as set out in section 30 of the Housing Grants, Regeneration and Construction Act 1996) will continue to apply to major (higher cost) adaptations, and these will be funded by DFG or Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance.

Where a test of resources applies to an application for Disabled Facilities Grant, it will apply similarly to applications for discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance, except where related applications for DFG and discretionary DFA are made on the same date. In these circumstances, the test of resources will be applied once and any contribution which the applicant is assessed as being able to make will be deducted from the total financial assistance to be awarded (i.e. the total amount of mandatory DFG and discretionary DFA added together).

Section 5 - Test of resources for successive applications

Where an applicant has applied previously for DFG or Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance, any contribution which he/she made in respect of the previous application can be deducted from the contribution required in respect of the current application, if his/her circumstances meet the criteria below:

- a) In the case of an 'Owner's application' within 10 years of the date of approval of the current application, a previous 'owner's application' was made and approved in respect of Disabled Facilities Grant or discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance or signified scheme consent, for the same dwelling or building, and where at least one of the relevant persons is a relevant person in the current application and vice versa.

- b) In the case of a 'Tenant's application' within 5 years of the date of approval of the current application, a previous 'tenant's application' was made and approved in respect of Disabled Facilities Grant or discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance for the same dwelling or building, and where at least one of the relevant persons is a relevant person in the current application and vice versa.

Section 6 - Applications for adaptations for children with a disability

A test of resources does not apply to applications for Disabled Facilities Grant of any value for a child with a disability. For such applications, the grant (if approved) will cover the full cost of eligible works (up to the statutory maximum).

Section 7 - Adaptations for persons who are eligible for palliative care

Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance will also be considered towards the cost of work necessary to allow access into and within the home, bathing and personal care for a person who is eligible for palliative care services (irrespective of whether or not those services are being provided).

The test of resources will not apply to applications made by persons eligible for palliative care services where the cost of the eligible work does not exceed £10,000. Where the cost of the work exceeds £10,000, applications will be considered at the Council's discretion on a case by case basis, subject to the availability of funding.

Section 8 - Considering whether the adaptation works are reasonable and practicable

In considering an award of either Disabled Facilities Grant or Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance, the Council will need to be satisfied that the adaptation works provide the most effective long-term solution, and will take into account the current and likely future needs of the disabled occupant and the physical attributes of the property. In some instances, the disabled occupant's existing home may not be suitable for adaptation (or if adaptations were to be carried out, the property would still not meet the needs of the disabled person). In such circumstances, and with the agreement of all parties, the Council may consider other options, such as assisting the household to move to accommodation that is, or could (without major alteration) be made more suitable. Where help to assist people to move to more suitable accommodation is available, it will be offered outside of the scope of these policies.

Section 9 - Maximum and minimum grant amounts

As stated above, the maximum amount which can be awarded under Disabled Facilities Grant is currently £36,000. There is no statutory limit on the amount of Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance which the Council will consider. However, each application will be considered on its merit.

Adaptations to the home of private owners or tenants which are likely to cost less than £350 are delivered on the Council's behalf by Conwy and Denbighshire Care and Repair, and funded by Social Care. Adaptations delivered under this scheme, known as the Minor Repairs and Adaptations Service, are not subject to a test of resources.

Adaptations which are likely to cost more than £350 but less than £1500 are funded through Enable (see Section 9), and are again delivered by Conwy and Denbighshire Care and Repair. Such applications are not subject to a test of resources.

Section 10 - Rapid Response Adaptations Programme

Funded and delivered by the Health Authority, the Rapid Response Adaptations Programme aims to assist eligible applicants to return home more quickly following a stay in hospital.

Section 11 - Making an enquiry about an adaptation

Initial enquiries should be directed to the Single Point of Access Team on 0300 456 1111 or by visiting <https://www.conwy.gov.uk/en/Resident/Social-Care-and-Wellbeing/Forms/Form-Conwy-Access-Team-Enquiry.aspx> who will direct the enquiry to the appropriate service.

Where the team considers that an adaptation may be an appropriate means of addressing the disabled person's housing need, a referral will be sent to an Occupational Therapist. All adaptation works must be supported by either an Occupational Therapist or Trusted Assessor.

Disabled Facilities Grant	
What is Disabled Facilities Grant?	Disabled Facilities Grant is a mandatory grant that is used towards the cost of adaptations to the home of someone with a disability to enable them to live safely and as independently as possible
Who can apply?	Owner occupiers, private tenants, and tenants of Housing Associations (in some circumstances)
How much can someone apply for?	The maximum grant is set in legislation and is currently £36,000 (in Wales)
Does the grant cover the full cost of the adaptation?	Yes for small and medium adaptations Major adaptations funded by DFG will be subject to a test of resources
Adaptations for a disabled child	Applications of any value for a DFG for a disabled child are not subject to a test of resources
Adaptations for a person who is eligible for palliative care services	Applicants for a DFG for work necessary to allow access into and within the home, bathing and personal care, and who are eligible for palliative care services are not subject to a test of resources where the cost of the application does not exceed £10,000
Does the grant have to be repaid?	Grant conditions will apply to an award of DFG in excess of £10,000. In circumstances where repayment is required, the applicant will be required to repay to the Authority any amount which has been paid in excess of £5,000.

Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance	
What is Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance?	Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance is a discretionary grant which can be used to fund works: which are not eligible for Disabled Facilities Grant but are deemed necessary to ensure that the adaptation works fully meet the needs of the disabled person), or to provide a “top-up” to a mandatory DFG where the cost of the eligible adaptation work is higher than the statutory limit.
Who can apply?	Owner occupiers, private tenants, and tenants of Housing Associations (in some circumstances)
Does the grant cover the full cost of the work?	Yes for small and medium adaptations No for major adaptations (but see section 5 above)
Does the grant have to be repaid?	As above for Disabled Facilities Grants

Enable	
What is Enable?	Funded by Welsh Government, Enable is a fast track discretionary grant which can be awarded to provide small or medium adaptations to facilitate hospital discharge, or enable the applicant to remain living independently in their own home.
Who can apply?	Owner occupiers, private tenants, and tenants of Housing Associations (in some circumstances)
Does the grant cover the full cost of the work?	A test of resources does not apply to adaptations funded by Enable
Does the grant have to be repaid?	No

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd.