

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Housing Assistance Policy
2023

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1.0 Introduction

This policy sets out how Solihull Council (the Council) will offer financial help for improving and adapting homes in the Borough, together with the conditions and eligibility criteria associated with each type of assistance. Its aim is to support residents to improve their health and wellbeing by addressing problems with unsuitable homes that do not meet their needs.

The amount of discretionary assistance to be given each year will be determined by the Council and will be dependent upon the level of resources available.

Assistance delivered through this policy will also help us to achieve the aims and objectives of the Council as set out in several of its strategies and plans; helping to deliver actions and make improved living a reality for residents.

In a period of increasing pressures on resources it is important to target assistance to meet the needs of the most vulnerable residents in the borough.

Ensuring that homes are decent, accessible, safe, and secure is not only important for the health and wellbeing of the occupants, but is vital for the sustainability of communities. Many residents have the necessary resources to maintain and repair their own homes; however, some may need some assistance to do this, especially those who are elderly, on a low income, or have disabilities.

This policy and its provisions apply to any residents living in owner-occupied homes, housing association and private rented tenants (referred to as tenants in this policy). Assistance for tenants of Solihull Community Housing is defined within a separate policy which mirrors many of the contents of this policy.

This policy replaces all previously published Housing Assistance Policies and will apply to all applications from 2023 implementation.

2.0 Legal context

The **Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996**¹ (the 1996 Act) places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to help qualifying disabled people² for home adaptations. These works (called eligible works) must be considered “necessary and appropriate” to meet their needs and “reasonable and practicable” considering the age and condition of the property. These are called mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs).

As well as these mandatory grants, Local Authorities also have the general power under the **Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002**³ (the RRO) to give assistance for home repairs, improvements, and adaptations for the purpose of improving living conditions in its area.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/53/contents>

² These are people who are defined as disabled under section 100 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/1860/contents/made>

Funding for this assistance is provided through the Better Care Fund (BCF⁴) which combines money from health and social care budgets to deliver health and care services. Any assistance provided from this fund for this purpose must only be used for the specific purpose of funding adaptations for disabled people who qualify for a DFG made under the 1996 Act or the RRO.

The Care Act 2014⁵ requires local authorities to identify, provide and arrange services, facilities, and resources to prevent, delay or reduce the needs of individuals either for care or support. This includes the adaptation of properties. Statutory Guidance states: *"Local authorities must provide or arrange services, resources or facilities that maximise independence for those already with such needs, for example, interventions such as rehabilitation/reablement services, e.g. community equipment services and adaptations."*⁶

DFG Guidance 20227 states that where the social care authority determines that a need has been established it is its duty to assist, even where the housing authority is unable to approve or fully fund an application.

Under section 343 of the Armed Forces Act 20068 (inserted by section 8 of the Armed Forces Act 2021), Solihull Council is required to have due regard to the Armed Forces Covenant when allocating disabled facilities grants and allowing special consideration for veterans in some circumstances.

Under the **Housing Act 2004**⁹, Local Authorities have a duty to keep housing conditions under review, including having regard to hazards that might be dangerous or prejudicial to health for certain vulnerable groups.

The **Equality Act 2010**¹⁰ includes a definition of disabled which Solihull Council will use to determine eligibility for assistance under this policy. The definition states that a person is 'disabled' if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

The **Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970**¹¹ places a duty to assist disabled children and young people *'in arranging for the carrying out of any works of adaptation in [their home] or the provision of any additional facilities designed to secure [their] greater safety, comfort or convenience'* (Section 2). This duty arises where the authority has assessed the need for the specific adaptations.

⁴ The Better Care Fund (BCF) is a programme spanning both the NHS and local government which seeks to join-up health and care services, so that people can manage their own health and wellbeing and live independently in their communities for as long as possible.

⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

⁶ Department of Health, Care and Support Statutory Guidance: issued under the Care Act 2014, para 4.3

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disabled-facilities-grant-dfg-delivery-guidance-for-local-authorities-in-england/disabled-facilities-grant-dfg-delivery-guidance-for-local-authorities-in-england>

⁸ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/52/section/343A>

⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/contents>

¹⁰ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/6>

¹¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1970/44>

3.0 Background

Home adaptations can contribute to meeting a range of Public Health, NHS, and Social Care outcomes. 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.

It is a widely accepted fact that housing and health are closely linked and that the conditions that an individual or family live in can have a significant impact on their quality of life. The Department of Health published a Guidance Paper in 2017 called 'Improving Health through the Home' the introduction of which states:

“The right home environment is essential to health and wellbeing, throughout life. It is a wider determinant of health¹².”

4.0 Local context

Solihull is overall a relatively prosperous area and according to the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) was the 32nd least deprived upper tier local authority in England, out of 151 total upper tier authorities. It is also the least deprived upper tier authority in the West Midlands. However, at a District (lower tier) level there are seven authorities in the West Midlands who are less deprived than Solihull¹³.

Solihull is also relatively polarised in terms of deprivation, with parts of the Borough also being in the most deprived areas. Over one in ten Solihull residents live in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods, whilst nearly one in three live in the least deprived 10% in England.

Most of this deprivation relates to access to employment, education, and incomes. Housing is not seen as a major area of deprivation for the Borough. However, issues remain for disabled and vulnerable residents and this policy aims to address and support these.

There is significant research that evidences the benefits of both major and minor adaptations to older and disabled people to help them to remain living safely and independently at home and therefore the changes proposed within this policy should support the current and future aims of the Solihull Health and Wellbeing Strategy through clear and measurable actions relating to prevention and targeted support.

There is significant research that evidences the benefits of both major and minor adaptations to older and disabled people to help them to remain living safely and independently at home and therefore the changes proposed within this policy support this aim of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy through clear and measurable actions.

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-health-through-the-home/improving-health-through-the-home>

¹³ https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/InfoandIntelligence_Index-of-Multiple-Deprivation-Summary.pdf

Solihull's population is older than the England average with 21% of the population being over 65, compared to 18.2% in England and 18.5% across the West Midlands¹⁴. This, combined with the anticipated increase in population of this age group, and particularly in people aged over 85 means that by 2038 it is expected that people aged 85+ will account for 5% of the Solihull population, compared to 3% currently¹⁵. The impact of an increasing ageing population means that demand for services, such as those outlined in this policy, will increase and the impact that these services can make to the quality of life for older and vulnerable people will be significant.

5.0 Equality, diversity and inclusion

Solihull Council is committed to fulfilling its roles as an employer, service provider, purchaser of goods and services and community leader without discrimination. We will apply this policy fairly and give equality of opportunity and experience regardless of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, transgender status/gender reassignment, race and religion/belief. All members, employees and agents of the Council must seek to eliminate discrimination and promote equality and good relations between all groups. The Council's equality information can be found on the council's website at the following location: <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/About-the-Council/Equality-and-diversity>.

We want to improve the lives and well-being of everyone in the Borough. This policy is particularly relevant for anyone who has a disability or long-term condition. Our aim is to ensure that people have a safe and suitable home and immediate surrounding areas so that they can live independently in their current home for as long as is possible.

Solihull Council, Solihull Community Housing (our agents) and contractors will actively support applicants and treat them fairly throughout the customer journey. Examples of practical help include removing barriers for those with alternative communication needs and support with understanding technical issues and using equipment in a safe manner. The Council and its agents will record and monitor data to gain insight on the impact of this policy on diverse customers and help improve operational processes.

6.0 Priorities and capital resources

The DFG is a capital grant paid from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to local authorities in England to adapt older and disabled people's homes to help them to live independently and safely. Adaptations can include ramps, stair lifts and suitable heating systems. The DFG, which has run for more than 30 years, became part of the Better Care Fund (BCF) in April 2015.

Therefore, the DFG is one of the funding streams within the Better Care Fund (BCF), which is a programme spanning both the NHS and local government which seeks to

¹⁴ ONS mid-year Population Estimates 2018

¹⁵ <https://socialsolihull.org.uk/recruitment/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2019/09/Solihull-People-Place.pdf>

join-up health and care services, so that people can manage their own health and wellbeing, and live independently in their communities for as long as possible.

The requirements regarding delivery of the Better Care Fund (BCF) are set out in the BCF Framework. As the DFG forms part of the funding within the BCF arrangement, it must be spent in accordance with the locally agreed BCF plan.

The following capital financial resources are available to apply and deliver through this policy:

- Capital grants from central government distributed through the Better Care Fund (BCF) or otherwise.
- Where capital monies are provided through the BCF they will be allocated for spending in line with decisions regarding capital expenditure agreed with the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Local capital from the Council which may be provided for any specified purpose.
- Monies from national schemes such as energy company obligations.
- Money provided from partners or other public sector organisations to address specified problems.
- Money obtained from charitable or other sources on behalf of customers.

Local Housing Authorities are obliged first and foremost to deliver mandatory DFGs either via the 1996 Act route or an equally effective parallel pathway. Alternative discretionary assistance should not normally be promoted at the expense of delays to the statutory grant.

In addition to mandatory DFGs, Solihull Council has determined our local priorities to offer a range of discretionary grants to assist residents. Full details of the current available discretionary assistance can be found in Appendix B of this policy. Availability of the discretionary grants outlined in Appendix B is dependent upon available resources and there is no guarantee that funding will always be available for them.

7.0 Principles of assistance

The Council recognises that the primary responsibility for repairing and maintaining a property rests with the owner¹⁶. However, the Council has certain statutory responsibilities to fulfil and must also take steps to protect and assist vulnerable members of the community whilst providing advice to all residents to help them maintain their own homes and utilise government funding where appropriate.

The Council provides support to older and disabled individuals, and their carers, to help them to remain living independently, confidently, safely and with dignity in their own homes. Housing assistance can help to reduce the impact of a disabling environment and therefore maximise independence. It can also help to prevent or delay the need for care and support, both of which are central themes of the Care Act 2014.

¹⁶ The owner' is defined as the owner occupier or landlord.

In addition, housing assistance provides support to carers in their caring role and underpins a wide range of customer and carer outcomes including improved safety, greater independence, personal resilience, and well-being.

8.0 How assistance is delivered

Option 1 – Managed application process

The Council's DFG support service will fully manage the application on behalf of the applicant. This service is provided on behalf of the Council by Solihull Community Housing's Aids and Adaptations Team. The Team will handle everything on behalf of the applicant through an agreement between the applicant and the service. This is the easiest and least stressful option, particularly for more extensive adaptations, as the service will organise and manage both the funding application and the work.

The Team will:

- Where applicable, assess the applicant's financial circumstances by a statutory **means test** which will identify any contribution to be paid towards the cost of the works.
- Arrange for a technical officer to visit to discuss how the adaptations can be provided in the home and what building works or alterations are required to provide them.
- Draw up a schedule of works and plans (and planning permission or building regulations approval if required).
- Assist in the completion of the formal DFG application forms.
- Supervise the contractor on site on behalf of the applicant.
- Deal with any unforeseen works and interim payments.
- Arrange final payment to the contractor and collect any certificates and guarantees from them and pass them on the applicant.

Option 2 – Customer contractor process

This option is where an applicant may wish to use the services of the Council's DFG support service, as provided by Solihull Community Housing, to prepare their application for DFG, including the preparation of drawings but wishes to use their own choice of contractor to carry out the works.

A comprehensive information pack will be provided to any applicants who wish to pursue this option including the role of the Aids and Adaptations Team and the responsibilities regarding the works which will transfer to the applicant.

Option 3 – Customer managed process

This option is where an applicant may wish to complete all elements of the application, supporting information and building management themselves. An applicant can use their own architect or draftsman and contractors to plan, develop or build a preferred scheme.

A comprehensive information pack will be provided to any applicants who wish to pursue their own application which outlines the information required to make a DFG application and the requirements to receive DFG funding.

9.0 Fees and ancillary charges

The Council will consider reasonable fees for financial assistance. The following fees will be eligible for financial assistance if they have been properly incurred in making an application or seeking approval for the proposed works, or to ensure the satisfactory completion of works assisted under this policy;

- Confirmation, if sought by the Council, that the applicant has a relevant owner interest
- Relevant legal fees
- Technical and structural surveys
- Design and preparation of plans and drawings
- Preparation of schedules of relevant works
- Assistance in completing forms.
- Applications for building regulations approval (including application fee and preparation of related documents), planning permission, listed building consent and conservation area consent (and similar)
- Obtaining of estimates
- Consideration of tenders
- Supervision of the relevant works
- Disconnection and reconnection of utilities where necessitated by relevant works
- Payment of contractors
- In a case where the application is for adaptations support, the reasonable services, and charges of a (private) occupational therapist in relation to the relevant works.

10.0 Prioritisation

Where possible the Council will commence consideration of an enquiry for assessment for financial support or other services within this policy in chronological order of receipt of enquiry (for DFG this would be from receipt of referral from the OT service), subject to the following provisions;

- With the agreement of Project Manager, Aids and Adaptations, an enquiry must be considered as urgent if the customer would be unable to remain in their home safely unless the works are expedited, notwithstanding that care in the home is provided, OR that required works are necessary to facilitate discharge from hospital or nursing or residential care, OR that the disabled person has limited life expectancy.
- Any future priority scheme introduced by Adult Care and Support Management to triage demand through a risk managed approach, including the incorporation of any national policy or guidance
- The property subject of the enquiry is in such a condition as to present an immediate and significant danger to the occupants or visitors.

- For the purposes of budgetary control, a category of financial assistance may be given priority over another, or sums may be switched between categories but NOT to the detriment of mandatory DFGs
- For the purposes of policy or project implementation a category of financial assistance may be given priority over another

Where resources (financial, staffing, or other) are limited, those services which are provided for vulnerable groups, or the most vulnerable individuals will take priority over other types of assistance or cases.

Where a property, case, customer, or category of service is to be considered outside of chronological order the Solihull Community Housing Property Investment Manager or Project Manager, Aids and Adaptations, will sanction the action and a written record will be retained on file in justification of that decision.

11.0 Warranties

Solihull Council has determined that any lifts, hoists or wash/dry toilets installed under assistance outlined in this policy will receive a 10-year full service and maintenance warranty from the Council. This will be purchased at the point of installation and details provided to the applicant. Upon expiry of this warranty the responsibility for the servicing and maintenance of these items will become that of the property owner.

12.0 Complaints

Both the Council and Solihull Community Housing have a formal complaints procedure that will apply in relation to aspects of complaints about the implementation of any of the processes flowing from the policy. Details of the complaint's procedure will be provided on request or can be viewed on the relevant websites.

Any complaint will be investigated using the appropriate complaints procedures (either the council's or SCHs, depending on the situation) and any learning will be incorporated into service delivery changes and/or policy updates, as appropriate. Any member of the public who is dissatisfied with the performance of the DFG service in administering this policy may make a formal complaint through the Solihull Community Housing procedure. However, we would encourage both the public and the staff (and their supervisors) to try to address any misunderstandings or disagreements by mutual agreement – within the jurisdiction of the staff to do so – to avoid the need for a matter to escalate to formality. Staff must make the Project Manager, Aids and Adaptations, aware of such issues even if resolved, to facilitate learning and service improvement.

13.0 Service standards, key targets

There is no national standard for the services provided through this policy excepting a statutory requirement for Councils to determine valid and fully made applications for mandatory DFG within six months. This does not account for pre-application activities such as the screening process and the 'application support' and

administration including occupational therapy assessment, means testing, producing specifications, finding contractors etc. In practice, when an application is received by the DFG service it is practically complete and ready for an almost instant decision. In a few cases there may be details to pursue, such as proof of property ownership, landlord or owner's permission etc., and if there are alternative schemes under consideration or issues to do with financing the customers contribution. However, the service records all key activities and dates and can report on a variety of measures, including date enquiry received, date application submitted, date determined, date works started, value of works and contributions, date works finished, and completed.

Legislation also requires that works be completed within 12 months of any DFG grant approval being issued, but this can be extended by negotiation if there are valid reasons to do so, such as the customer receiving care, occasional changes in contractor or specification, complex snagging or reasons outside of anyone's control such as a pandemic.

Locally, the service aims to apply the funding it receives fully each year with minimal waiting lists and with maximum benefit to customers.

The Aids and Adaptations Team is committed to ensuring good quality customer service and the performance measures used are based around measuring and improving the quality of service and customer outcomes as well as ensuring improvements in the speed of service delivery.

14.0 Policy review

The Council intends to review the funding available for the discretionary grants available through this policy on an annual basis, and funding will be based upon available resources.

The intention is to review the policy on a formal basis every 5 years to ensure its provisions remain applicable and appropriate to the needs of vulnerable residents. Any revisions or updates to the provisions will be made subject to financial and staff resources being available to meet them and in line with other Corporate priorities.

The Council's Director of Adult Social Care has the delegated authority to make amendments to the policy prior to its next scheduled formal review should funding or residents needs indicate this is necessary.

Funding for all discretionary grants will be reviewed annually and their inclusion in this policy is no guarantee of availability.

14.0 Key definitions, references and abbreviations

- **RRO** – Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2002/1860/article/3/made>
- **The ‘Act’ (1996)** – Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/53/contents>
- **Total Council DFG** – the Disabled Facilities Grant that the Local Authority receives
- **Individually awarded DFG**- the Disabled Facilities Grant that individuals receive following the assessment and eligibility processes outlined above
- **DDFA** – Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance
- **BCF** – Better Care Fund
- **HHSRS** – the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, the prescribed system under the Housing Act 2004 for measuring hazards associated with housing conditions
- **ECO** – Energy Company Obligation
- **Certified Date** – the date certified by the service on behalf of the Council as that on which the execution of eligible works is completed to the Councils satisfaction. In this instance being the works complete date.
- **Dwelling** – a building or part of a building occupied or intended to be occupied as a separate dwelling, together with any yard, garden, outhouse, and appurtenance belonging to it or usually enjoyed with it.
- **Exempt disposal** – a disposal or transfer of the whole or part of the premises to a person whose main residence is the property and who is (a) one of the joint owners of the dwelling, or (b) the wife, husband, or partner (including same sex) of the owner or one of the joint owners of that property.
- **Relevant disposal** – a conveyance of the freehold or an assignment of the lease, or the granting of a long lease (one of over 21 years, otherwise than at rack rent)
- **Customer** – individuals being assessed or receiving a DFG
- **Carer** – individuals who look after people with care and support needs in a personal capacity
- **Contractor** – organisation commissioned to support the DFG process, including architects and building companies
- **Member of family** – a person is a member of the applicant’s family if they are the spouse of the applicant or living together as partners, or is the grandparent, parent or dependent child of the applicant or their spouse or partner (inclusive of same sex partners, stepchildren, adopted and foster children).
- **Owner-occupier** – whilst this term is self-explanatory, where appropriate it will include certain tenants with repairing type leases (sometimes called FRI or Full Repairing and Insuring Leases, of a suitable duration) who would otherwise be unable to insist their ‘superior landlord’ undertake renovations. Repairing lease tenants would qualify for DFG in their own right, with permission

15. Summary of Assistance

The following table provides a summary of the assistance types, an outline of the aims, and the outcomes provided through each scheme available under the policy.

Full details of how to apply, and conditions can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B.

All assistance provided through this policy is flexible, apart from the non-enhanced Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant, and is therefore available subject to the Council having sufficient resources.

The Policy grants discretion to extend or amend eligibility criteria, the level of grant or assistance and scope of works to the Director of Social Care in consultation with the Health and Social Care Cabinet Portfolio Holder where that assistance would help the council to meet its strategic housing objectives and/or Better Care Fund metrics.

The general terms and conditions of this policy are applicable to this additional discretionary assistance.

Part 1 – Mandatory Better Care Fund Assistance (full detail in Appendix A)

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	SCOPE	GRANT MAXIMUM	ELIGIBILITY	MAIN CONDITIONS
<p>Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled adaptations as described by the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. • All tenancy types. • To enable independence and prevent, reduce and delay the need for higher cost social care and health interventions. 	<p>Maximum £30,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This grant is set within legislation with local variations that the Council has adopted regarding the inclusion of warranty costs for lifts and wash/dry toilets and the inclusion of local council tax reduction as a passporting benefit • Meets disability criteria • Assessed by an OT/ appropriately qualified assessor • Subject to a financial means test. Children and certain qualifying young people will not be subject to any means test for a Mandatory DFG. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must remain in the property as only or main residence for 5 years • Local land charge for 10 years for owner occupiers except in exceptional circumstances where the condition may be waived by a senior manager.

Part 2 – Discretionary Better Care Fund Assistance (full details in Appendix B)

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	SCOPE	GRANT MAXIMUM	ELIGIBILITY	MAIN CONDITIONS
Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance - Top-Up (Full detail in appendix B, B1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover the costs of adaptations over the mandatory DFG limit. All tenures eligible for DFG funding To enable independence and prevent, reduce, and delay the need for higher cost social care and health interventions. 	£unlimited – each case assessed individually on need and cost/benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligible for DFG Meets disability criteria Assessed by an OT/ appropriately qualified assessor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must remain in the property as only or main residence for 5 years Must be the disabled persons main and permanent residence Local land charge for owner occupiers for 10 years after certified completion
Discretionary Contribution Grant (Full detail in appendix B, B2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover the cost of contributions assessed as being unaffordable, identified under mandatory DFG To enable independence and prevent, reduce and delay the need for higher cost social care and health interventions. 	£30,000 – full details on approval process in the detailed appendix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligible for DFG Meets disability criteria Assessed by an OT/ suitably qualified assessor Subject to a formal means test undertaken as part of the mandatory DFG means test and all other options to cover the contribution being exhausted - family and friend financial support, charitable donations, and assessment by third party loan provider. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must remain in the property as only or main residence for 5 years Local land charge for 10 years for owner occupiers
Help to Move Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To cover some of the costs associated with moving home when an applicant's current home is 	£5000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligible for DFG Meets disability criteria Assessed by an OT/suitably 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants must be moving within or outside the Council area to a property that will be their main residence.

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	SCOPE	GRANT MAXIMUM	ELIGIBILITY	MAIN CONDITIONS
(Full detail in appendix B, B3)	<p>unsuitable for an adaptation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All tenures eligible for DFG support • To enable independence and prevent, reduce and delay the need for higher cost social care and health interventions. 		qualified assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants must have a local connection with the outside area they are relocating to e.g., family support, employment • Assistance will not be given towards the purchase price of a property. • Applications must be supported by an OT/ suitably qualified assessor who can confirm that the new property will meet the needs of the disabled person or be suitable for adaptation at a reasonable cost. (In some cases, depending on the distance of the potential property an independent OT maybe commissioned to do this assessment) <p>If the move is aborted at the fault or choice of the applicant, costs will not be paid</p>
Enhanced Minor Adaptations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase the amount of funding and scope of works which can be completed through minor works process 	£500 (in addition to the £1,000 available under minor works,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone eligible for minor works assistance as assessed by social care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no formal means test or land charge • Applicants must be permanent residents of Solihull to be eligible and

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	SCOPE	GRANT MAXIMUM	ELIGIBILITY	MAIN CONDITIONS
(Full details in Appendix B – B4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support any works which will meet a Care Act outcome 	making a total of £1,500		must have legal recourse to public funds to access this additional funding.
Stairlift and Hoist Grant (Full detail in appendix B, B5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of a non means tested stairlift or ceiling track hoist with a full 10-year service and maintenance package To enable independence and timely discharge from a hospital or care setting & prevent, reduce and delay the need for higher cost social care and health interventions. 	Cost of an internal stairlift or ceiling track hoist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets disability criteria Assessed by an OT/ suitably qualified assessor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only one grant will be awarded in any rolling 12-month period Property must be the disabled persons main permanent residence.
Second Carer Homes Grants (Full details in Appendix B – B6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support adaptations in the homes of separated parents to enable a child to spend time with both parents or established carers. 	£30,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligible for DFG (if it were the primary residence) Meets disability criteria Assessed by an OT/ appropriately qualified assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No means test as disabled person is a child. The Mandatory DFG land charge will apply, One application per eligible child.
Safe and Secure Grants (Full details in Appendix B – B7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure any identified essential repairs to a home to enable a Mandatory DFG to be carried out can be completed. Works should be to 	£10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligible for DFG Required to enable DFG works to be completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owner-occupiers only Must have owned the property for 5 years prior to application Must be in receipt of a passporting benefit

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	SCOPE	GRANT MAXIMUM	ELIGIBILITY	MAIN CONDITIONS
	facilitate the DFG and remedy a Category 1 or high Category 2 Hazard as assessed under HHSRS.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works must be to enable a DFG to be carried out • 10-year local land charge
<p>Small Adaptations Grant</p> <p>(Full details in Appendix B – B8)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To facilitate small adaptations costing less than £8,000 	£8,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets disability criteria • Assessed by an OT/ suitably qualified assessor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is based on the cost of works being below £8,000 – if works exceed this cost threshold then the Mandatory DFG would apply • No formal means test • Must remain in the property as only or main residence for 5 years • Local land charge for 10 years for owner occupiers • Only one grant will be awarded in any rolling 12-month period •

Appendix A – Mandatory DFG

This is included for context and information purposes and includes an amendment relating to the means test.

The Council will award mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) according to the governing legislation – principally the 1996 Act and subordinate Regulations and Orders as amended - and guidance issued by central Government, and which details amongst other matters the types of work that are to be funded, the maximum grant payable (currently £30,000), and the test of financial resources where applicable.

Qualifying criteria

All qualifying people, as set out in sections 19-22 of the 1996 Act, are eligible to *apply* for DFG. Applicants must be aged 18 or over (this refers to the applicant who may be different to the disabled person) and must be either the owner or the tenant of the property in which the adaptations is to be carried out. Tenants of Council and other Social Housing are also eligible to apply, but Solihull Community Housing, on behalf of Solihull Council, and some social landlords, have parallel and equally effective systems to provide their tenants with adaptations. Any service offered must be no less effective or generous than DFG. Being eligible to apply for a grant does not automatically mean a grant will be approved, some cases will not meet the statutory tests as described below, and others may have means tested contributions which are more than the cost of works. Private tenants may also apply for mandatory DFG. For all tenant applications, the landlord must give permission for the works to be carried out for a grant to be approved. All applicants are required to sign to confirm that it is their intention to remain in that property for a 5-year period after works have been completed. DFG funding is available to meet the needs for all types of disability including (but not exclusively) physical, mental, and learning.

Qualifying works

Those works eligible for mandatory DFG are set out in section 23(1) of the 1996 Act, as amended. The exact purposes for which a DFG may be awarded as set out in the legislation are set out below:

- (i) facilitating access by the disabled occupant to and from the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or qualifying park home, (now including the garden) or
- (ii) making the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or qualifying park home safe for the disabled occupant and other persons residing with them;
- (iii) facilitating access by the disabled occupant to a room used or usable as the principal family room;
- (iv) facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room used or usable for sleeping;
- (v) 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;
- (vi) 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;

- (vii) facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a wash hand basin, or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility;
- (viii) facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled occupant;
- (ix) improving any heating system in the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or qualifying park home to meet the needs of the disabled occupant or, if there is no existing heating system or any such system is unsuitable for use by the disabled occupant, providing a heating system suitable to meet their needs;
- (x) facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of a source of power, light or heat by altering the position of one or more means of access to or control of that source or by providing additional means of control;
- (xi) facilitating access and movement by the disabled occupant around the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or qualifying park home in order to enable them to care for a person who is normally resident and is in need of such care;
- (xii) facilitating access to and from a garden by a disabled occupant; or making access to a garden safe for a disabled occupant.

Local enhancement to DFG in Solihull

Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR) amendment to the means test

Applicants in receipt of LCTR will be exempted from the requirement of the Test of Resources (the Means Test). Prior to the Government's revision of the list of passported benefits in 1996, applicants in receipt of Council Tax Benefit were exempt from the Test of Resources. Council Tax Benefit is a similar benefit to LCTR, but is no longer available. Inclusion of entitlement to LCTR as a passported benefit restores the pre-1996 position and consequently will enable a number of residents receiving LCTR to apply without undergoing the Test of Resources.

Necessary, appropriate, reasonable & practicable

A DFG will only be made if the works are both 'necessary and appropriate' and 'reasonably practicable', where both Adult Care and Support and the Aids and Adaptations Team have confirmed this. Where an applicant prefers a different scheme of works to that approved by the Council and its representatives, the Council may offer to 'offset' the value of the original scheme towards those greater works with appropriate safeguards. This is at the discretion of the Council.

Works which have been commenced prior to the approval of an application will not be eligible for financial assistance.

Unexpected works which arise during the carrying out of eligible works will be considered for assistance if the works could not have been reasonably foreseen before commencement and if they are vital to the completion of a safe and effective scheme. Unforeseen works carried out without prior approval of the Council will not be eligible for assistance. Where unforeseen works are necessary these will be added to the grant up to the specified maximum for mandatory DFG. Costs above the mandatory grant maximum may be supported as DDFA in accordance with this policy. Care must be taken when agreeing to schemes of works on third-party property such as tenanted accommodation, that the property owner is fully engaged with the decision process.

This is also particularly important where an architect or similar is acting on the customers behalf, and where issues such as planning permission, building control and other regulation are involved.

Fees

The Council's DFG award is for a sum of funding only and is not inclusive or exclusive of using contractors or products. Customers may specify and choose their own contractors, agent, products, and design – but take responsibility for those choices which may fall outside of the remit of any appointed contractors, as long as the contractors are suitably qualified, and the result meets the Council's appointed Aids and Adaptations Team and Occupational Therapist's requirements.

Financial assistance

Mandatory DFG will be subject to a means test in accordance with the regulations made under the 1996 Act, as amended. The maximum mandatory DFG award is currently £30,000 minus any contribution required by a 'means test' (test of financial resources). Successive applications may be awarded for those persons whose condition is degenerative, or they develop additional needs. If the maximum grant limit is changed by statute, then the maximum available DFG award by Solihull Council will reflect this. Where successive applications are awarded, the applicants' assessed contribution to the first grant award will be considered if within the relevant time period (10 years if owner, 5 years if tenant).

NOTE: where an applicant is in receipt of a recognised, qualifying, means tested benefit they will not be further means tested and they will have no calculated contribution to make. Where works are for the benefit of a child or young person of 19 years of age or younger at the date of application – they too will be exempt from a means test.

Order of processing applications

DFG applications or recommendations will usually be processed in chronological order, in line with the approved priority system, excepting in emergency circumstances at the discretion of the Council. Any further prioritisation is set out in section 10 of the Policy.

Recovery of assistance awarded

Some mandatory DFG may be recoverable in accordance with permitted values. Where the customer is an owner-occupier and not a tenant, a sum of up to £10,000 may be recovered for works more than £5,000. This sum would only be recovered if the property were sold or title otherwise transferred within 10 years of the certified (completion) date of works, subject to the Council's discretion to reduce or waive in the case of financial hardship. All recoverable costs would be registered as a local land charge against the property.

NOTE: this is separate and different to the potential repayment of grant in the event of a breach of occupancy conditions or detected fraud. Also, Councils are entitled to recalculate grant awards in limited circumstances, such as for example if any relevant

insurance claims are pending, and to cease making payments and to seek repayment in some cases as detailed in sections 40-42 of the 1996 Act.

Conditions relating to contractors, standard of works and invoices

In approving an application for financial assistance, the Council will require as a condition that the eligible works are carried out in accordance with any specification it has decided to impose.

The eligible works must be carried out by the contractor(s) upon whose estimate the financial assistance is based, or if two estimates were submitted, by one of those contractors. The Council's consent must be obtained prior to the works if a contractor who did not submit an estimate is to carry out the works, and if an agreement is given, an estimate from the new contractor must be submitted (this does not automatically convey a difference in revised grant award – any additional costs must be separately financed by the applicant).

An invoice, demand or receipt will not be acceptable if it is given by the applicant or a member of the applicant's family. Where works are carried out by the applicant or a member of their family, only the cost of materials used will be eligible for financial assistance.

It is a condition of the financial assistance that the eligible works are carried out within 12 months of the date of approval of the application. This period may be extended if appropriate, particularly where it is satisfied that the eligible works cannot be completed for good reasons. Requests for additional time must be made in writing before the 12-month period ends, and approved extra time will be confirmed in writing.

The payment of the financial assistance to the applicant will be dependent upon the works being carried out to a standard that is satisfactory to the Council or its appointed agent and upon receipt of a satisfactory invoice or receipt for the works and any preliminary or ancillary services or changes.

Grant payments will usually be made directly to the contractor on behalf of the applicant, unless it is a 'preferred' contractor when payment will be made to the applicant as the responsibility for works and payment would transfer to them. Where the applicant disagrees with a payment made direct to a contractor, no payment shall be made until any dispute is resolved. Legislation permits the Council to make payment by delivering to the applicant an instrument of payment in a form made payable to the contractor, OR by making payment direct to the applicant in accordance with information provided prior to grant approval.

NOTE: Contractors receiving direct payment may be required to provide sufficient information to be set up on the appropriate financial systems – BUT this should not frustrate the applicant's choice, as the mandatory DFG grant (only) is an award of funds and not an award tied to a specific contractor with additional financial conditions.

Future occupation of the dwelling

It is a condition of the grant that throughout the grant condition period (that is 5 years from the date of certification) the dwelling is occupied in accordance with the

intention stated in the certificate of owner occupation or availability for letting or intended tenancy.

Customer Own Schemes (COS)

Customers who meet the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) eligibility and are therefore entitled to a grant allocation may wish to 'top-up' the DFG funding. The DFG recommendation by the Occupational Therapist will be for the most cost-effective solution which meets all identified needs and will look to adapt an existing property e.g. by removing the bath and replacing with a level access shower (wet room). Customers may prefer to choose a different option and a wet room upstairs may not be the preferred washing facility. The customer will be responsible for the difference in costs between the DFG 'Mandatory Scheme' and the final cost of the works, including unforeseen costs.

The Aids and Adaptations team technical service and Occupational Therapist will work with the customer, their architect, and builders as applicable, to ensure that the final scheme meets the disabled person's needs and where applicable planning and building control regulations have been adhered to.

If an applicant pursues their own scheme, not the mandatory scheme, then the Council will provide a copy of all necessary documentation required for a valid and complete application to be made and will provide an information pack regarding how to proceed. In these circumstances the applicant would follow application 'Option C' outlined in the policy and will fully manage their application process and subsequent build.

Repayment

Where a charge (repayable grant) is due for recovery, on receipt of a written request from the responsible person the Project Manager, Aids and Adaptations will consider the options to reduce or waive repayment in particular circumstances to be determined in accordance with the following criteria;

- the extent to which the recipient of the grant would suffer financial hardship were they to be required to repay all or any of the grant;
- whether the disposal of the premises is to enable the recipient of the grant to take up employment, or to change the location of their employment;
- whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or wellbeing of the recipient of the grant or of a disabled occupant of the premises;
- whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to live with, or near, any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the recipient of the grant is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the recipient of the grant is in need by reason of disability or infirmity.

If that initial decision is not accepted and further appealed, details of that appeal will be determined by appropriate Senior Managers within Solihull Community Housing and the Council. Their decision is final and the only route of appeal after that is the complaints process.

All recoverable charges will be recorded as local land charges.

The land charge will be placed in accordance with 2008 General Consent¹⁷ which enabled local authorities to place a local land charge for the portion of the grant over £5,000. The charge can be up to £10,000 and applies if the owner wants to sell the property within 10 years of the certified (completion) date.

Worked examples of the charge are given below:

	Total Grant Awarded	Exempt Amount	Remaining Value of Grant	Charge Placed
Example A	£12,000	£5,000	£7,000	£7,000
Example B	£15,000	£5,000	£10,000	£10,000
Example C	£25,000	£5,000	£20,000	£10,000

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7811/generalconsent2008.pdf

Appendix B – Discretionary grants

B1 - Discretionary disabled facilities assistance (Top-Up)

Aims

The aim of the scheme is to help the vulnerable members of the community where the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is insufficient to cover the full cost of the works or where the works are out of scope of the legislation but by completing them there would be demonstrable savings to the wider public purse and clear benefits to the applicant and/or their family/carers.

How will it be funded?

DDFA grants would be funded from the DFG Budget. This is subject to the council's usual financial monitoring processes. If usual financial monitoring processes identifies there is only enough DFG budget available to meet the mandatory DFG assistance requirements, then the discretionary flexibility will not be utilised for any full or part year where that situation is applicable.

Who will it help?

Those assessed as clinically eligible for Mandatory DFG assistance but where the cost of the works exceeds the mandatory DFG funding limit. It will be available for mandatory needs only. Discretionary assistance is not available for 'preferred designs'.

Individuals where works are out of scope of the legislation but by completing them there would be demonstrable savings to the wider public purse and clear benefits to the applicant and/or their family/carers.

Will it be means-tested?

There will be no additional formal means test.

How much funding might be available?

DDFA may be awarded and will be subject to the availability of resources. Additional funding may be available as a top-up to owner occupiers* with sufficient equity (for works above the Mandatory DFG limit as set out in current legislation, which is currently £30,000).

Where the additional funding required is less than £20,000 then the decision will be based upon evidence provided by the Aids and Adaptations Team to the Project Manager, Aids and Adaptations. However, if funding is required between £20,001 and £50,000 then it must be presented to a DFG Decision-Making panel which would include Senior Representatives from both Solihull Community Housing and Solihull Council Social Care, and alternative options, such as moving, would need to have been demonstrated to have been explored in full.

If funding is required above this amount then this would be on an exception basis and will require approval by the Adult Care and Support Directorate Leadership Team, with a supporting report from the DFG Decision-Making panel.

Will there be a charge against the property?

For owner-occupiers DDFA will be registered, in full, as a local land charge against the property for a period of 10 years and will be recovered on the sale or transfer of the property, subject to rules regarding exempt sales.

Note – this is separate to the £10,000 recoverable DFG which expires at 10 years from certification of works completion.

Conditions attached to the DDFA

The person must be a permanent resident of Solihull and the property must be their permanent address.

Conditions restricting future use and ownership of the property – the following additional conditions will apply where the Council has made an award of DDFA;

- The owner will notify the Council in writing if a relevant disposal of the property is proposed.
- The owner of the property will provide, within 21 days of a written notice from the Council, a statement confirming the ownership and occupancy of the dwelling. If the property has been sold or transferred the statement will include the date of transfer of ownership.
- DDFA will be registered as a charge against the property and will be repayable on sale or transfer of the property, subject to exempt sales. The charge will be binding on successors in title.
- It is a condition of DDFA that where an owner makes a relevant disposal of the dwelling, other than an exempt disposal, the DDFA shall be repayable subject to above.
 - If a relevant disposal takes place after a period of 10 years after the certified date of completion of works, no amount shall be recovered which, after repayment of all charges registered against the property, results in owner(s) having a residual equity of less than £10,000. No account will be taken by the Council of charges subsequent to the charges registered by the Council.
 - If the property is transferred, or the sale price does not reflect the market price, the Council will have the right to seek an independent valuation of the market value, which will be binding on both parties, in order to recover the grant repayable.

If the applicant for DDFA is a tenant then the Council will liaise with the appropriate landlord to explore whether alternative funding options, such as funding from the landlord and/or moving to alternative suitable accommodation is an option, before approving DDFA.

Applications for DDFA will be considered for unforeseen works once works have already been started if the scheme is a Mandatory Scheme.

Where an applicant is pursuing a 'preferred' scheme and has received the maximum eligible mandatory grant funding then applications for DDFA will not be considered.

A maximum of one application for DDFA will be considered in any 5-year period.

How to apply?

By contacting the Adult Care and Support One Front Door Team:

Tel: 01217048007

Email: ccadults@solihull.gov.uk

Funding will be awarded on a case-by-case basis as outlined above.

B2 – Discretionary Contribution Grant (DCG)

Aims

The means test, as set out in the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 has remained unchanged since the introduction of DFGs in their current form in 1996. It does not consider the outgoings of a household and can mean that vulnerable people are unable to proceed with the adaptations they need to help them live at home due to an unaffordable assessed contribution level.

The aim of this scheme is to help the vulnerable members of the community who are unable to proceed with adaptations because of a means tested contribution which is unaffordable and where not completing the adaptations means they are at significant risk in their home or will result in increased costs to the wider Social Care budgets. It gives the Council the ability to pay these contributions from discretionary funding, therefore enabling works to go ahead and the applicant to remain living in their home.

How will it be funded?

DDFA grants would be funded from the DFG Budget. This is subject to the council's usual financial monitoring processes. If usual financial monitoring processes identifies there is only enough DFG budget available to meet the mandatory DFG assistance requirements, then the discretionary flexibility will not be utilised for any full or part year where that situation is applicable.

Who will it help?

Those clinically eligible for Mandatory DFG assistance but where payment of their means tested assessed contribution would demonstrably result in financial hardship.

Will it be means-tested?

There will be no additional formal means test.

How much funding might be available?

DCG, up to a maximum of £30,000, may be awarded where the following conditions are met:

- i. The applicant is not able to proceed with the works due to the assessed contribution.
and
- ii. There is a report from the OT recommending and demonstrating a severe health impact if assistance is refused.
or
- iii. Evidence that the lack of adaptations leaves the applicant at risk in their home and there is no suitable alternative.
or
- iv. Evidence that not completing the adaptations could result in increased costs to the Social Care Budget.

and

- v. Evidence of financial hardship can be provided (e.g., proof of inability to obtain funds from high street loan and/or proof of outgoings/ lack of savings etc.) and the individual is unable to fund / fully fund the adaptation.

Applications for this grant will be considered and approved as follows:

£1 to £5,000 – will be approved by the Project Manager, Aids and Adaptations.

£5,001 to £10,000 – will be approved by the DFG Decision-Making Panel with a supporting report from the Aids and Adaptations manager, this panel will include senior officers representing both Solihull Community Housing and Solihull Council Social Care.

£10,001 to £30,000 – will be approved by the Adult Care and Support Directorate Leadership Team with a supporting report from the DFG Decision-Making Panel.

Will there be a charge against the property?

DCG will be registered, in full, as a local land charge against the property for a period of 10 years and will be recovered on the sale or transfer of the property, subject to rules regarding exempt sales.

Note – this is separate to the £10,000 recoverable DFG which expires at 10 years from certification of works completion.

Conditions attached to the DCG

The person must be a permanent resident of Solihull and the property must be their permanent address.

Conditions restricting future use and ownership of the property – the following additional conditions will apply where the Council has made an award of DCG;

- The owner will notify the Council in writing if a relevant disposal of the property is proposed.
- The owner of the property will provide, within 21 days of a written notice from the Council, a statement confirming the ownership and occupancy of the dwelling. If the property has been sold or transferred the statement will include the date of transfer of ownership.
- DCG will be registered as a charge against the property and will be repayable on sale or transfer of the property, subject to exempt sales. The charge will be binding on successors in title.
- It is a condition of DCG that where an owner makes a relevant disposal of the dwelling, other than an exempt disposal, the DCG shall be repayable subject to above.
 - If a relevant disposal takes place after a period of 10 years after the certified date of completion of works, no amount shall be recovered which, after repayment of all charges registered against the property, results in owner(s) having a residual equity of less than £10,000. No account will be taken by the Council of charges after the charges registered by the Council.

- If the property is transferred, or the sale price does not reflect the market price, the Council will have the right to seek an independent valuation of the market value, which will be binding on both parties, to recover the grant repayable.

A maximum of one application for DCG will be considered in any 5-year period.

How to apply?

By contacting the Adult Care and Support One Front Door Team:

Tel: 01217048007

Email: ccadults@solihull.gov.uk

Funding will be awarded on a case-by-case basis as outlined above.

B3 - Help to move / relocation Grant

Aims

The aim of the scheme is to help the vulnerable members of the community where it is not possible to adapt their current home, but by supporting them to move to more suitable accommodation there would be demonstrable savings to the wider public purse and clear benefits to the applicant and/or their family/carers.

How will it be funded?

DDFA grants would be funded from the DFG Budget. This is subject to the council's usual financial monitoring processes. If usual financial monitoring processes identifies there is only enough DFG budget available to meet the mandatory DFG assistance requirements, then the discretionary flexibility will not be utilised for any full or part year where that situation is applicable.

Who will it help?

Those eligible for Mandatory DFG assistance.

Will it be means-tested?

There will be no formal means test.

Support to move / relocate

Funding may be available to assist the disabled person to move to a more suitable property where it is impracticable to adapt or more cost effective than adapting the current home of a disabled person to make it suitable for their present or future needs, even though the new property may need some adaptation.

Criteria for consideration in cases of help-to-move/relocate; (this is not an exclusive or exhaustive list; as other factors may become apparent with experience):

- The disabled person may need to move to give or receive care, or to receive medical treatment.
- The disabled person may need to move to maintain or gain employment.
- The cost of works to the current property may exceed the benefit to the applicant.
- The cost of works may exceed the available grant and loan maximum and any available applicant or third-party contribution.
- The applicant's calculated contribution may be unaffordable and moving/buying is a better financial solution.
- The applicant may need to move to reduce rent and/or release spare bedrooms which they can no longer afford (e.g., benefits cap and/or the spare room subsidy).
- A different property may provide a greater benefit for the applicant for the funds.
- The current property may not be adaptable, and another property may be more amenable to adaptation.

- The current property may contain hazards or defects which would not be sufficiently addressed by the works or otherwise by the applicant or owner.
- The property owner (landlord) refuses to permit the adaptation.
- The property is for sale, or pending foreclosure, bankruptcy (as security against debt) or repossession.
- The tenancy is due to end and not be renewed or is otherwise unstable.
- Relationship breakdown.
- The applicant wishes to downsize
- The applicant and disabled person must have a 'local connection' to any area they wish to move to if outside of Solihull Borough. Local connection will be determined as in the housing allocation policy of the Council.

The Aids and Adaptations Team is required to consult the OT Service to consider what assistance would be necessary and appropriate for the applicant, and then apply a test of what is reasonable and practicable in the circumstances of the property. The service must consider viable alternative solutions which appear more cost effective.

Such solutions may include contributions towards costs incurred as part of an alternative house-purchase and moving to an already adapted or more economically adaptable and suitable property. Funding will not be given towards the purchase price of an alternative property but may be provided towards legal and moving costs. Moving and house purchase finance will be determined on a case-by-case basis determined by:

- the tenure and location of the original and new properties,
- the residual equity and any increased mortgage debt,
- whether moving within the Council's jurisdiction, or beyond,
- whether the original property is unadaptable, unaffordable, or poor value to adapt,

or that moving is purely an occupier choice or because of a landlord's refusal to permit adaptation.

Mandatory DFG of up to £30,000 is available for adaptations in properties residents have moved to (within the local area only) but may be reduced by any assessed contributions.

Help to move assistance is available to owner-occupiers and to tenants' subject to individual determination.

As there are too many variables to set a fixed policy on awards for moving or buying property, each case will be determined on its merits subject to resources by recommendation from the Case Officer to the Project Manager, Aids and Adaptations with sufficient discretionary authority to approve works of that value.

[How much funding might be available?](#)

Help to Move funding may be awarded and will be subject to the availability of resources. A maximum of £5,000 may be available to support costs solely associated with moving home.

Will there be a charge against the property?

There will be no land charge registered against the property.

Conditions attached to the Grant

The person must currently be a permanent resident of Solihull and the property must be their current and intended permanent address.

A maximum of one application will be considered in any 5-year period.

How to apply?

By contacting the Adult Care and Support One Front Door Team:

Tel: 01217048007

Email: ccadults@solihull.gov.uk

Funding will be awarded on a case-by-case basis as outlined above.

B4 – Enhanced minor adaptations

Aims

The grant increases the amount of funding available to complete works through the Social Care minor works scheme and raises the maximum funding available per application to £1,500.

The first £1,000 of all minor works would continue to be funded through Adult Care and Support (including for children and young people) with the additional monies being available for larger works where necessary.

The works may include any of the minor adaptations works covered by the existing provision but also can include the following, which may be fully funded from the EMA funding if not eligible for social care funding:

- Deep cleaning
- Decluttering
- making changes to lighting to improve brightness and visibility
- changing cupboard doors to glass fronted ones to aid recognition of items inside
- redecorating selected dark coloured walls that will give a calmer effect
- replacing selected floor coverings that cause confusion or safety issues
- replacing bathroom toilet seats and rails with coloured to improve visual perception
- installing signage for easier recognition
- ensuring safe access to the property and that it is free from hazards
- provision of a safe space
- Carbon monoxide/cold/heat alarms
- Digital assistive technology

This list is not exhaustive and each case for enhanced funding must be referred from the Council's Occupational Therapy service. The expenditure is approved by the Occupational Therapist with oversight from the Occupational Therapy Assistant Team Managers and Clinical Lead.

How will it be funded?

DDFA grants would be funded from the DFG Budget. This is subject to the council's usual financial monitoring processes. If usual financial monitoring processes identifies there is only enough DFG budget available to meet the mandatory DFG assistance requirements, then the discretionary flexibility will not be utilised for any full or part year where that situation is applicable.

Who will it help?

Any disabled or vulnerable person who has been assessed and referred by Social Care OT Service.

Will it be means-tested?

There will be no formal means test.

How much funding might be available?

The maximum funding available is £500 per application (in addition to the Social Care funding available) or £1,500 for works which are not eligible for social care funding.

Will there be a charge against the property?

There will be no land charge registered against the property.

Will there be any conditions attached?

The person must be a permanent resident of Solihull and the property must be their permanent address.

A maximum of one application per annum.

How to apply

By contacting the Adult Care and Support One Front Door Team:

Tel: 01217048007

Email: ccadults@solihull.gov.uk

Funding will be awarded on a case-by-case basis as outlined above.

B5 – Stairlift and Hoist Grant (Discretionary)

Aims

The grant increases the number of residents who would be eligible to receive assistance for a stairlift or hoist by removing the means test element for these adaptations.

Any eligible person who has been assessed as requiring a stairlift or hoist under the Mandatory DFG criteria would be eligible to receive a stairlift and/or hoist under this scheme.

The eligible works will be:

- Internal stairlift
- Internal Ceiling Track Hoist

How will it be funded?

Stairlift and Hoist Grants would be funded from the DFG Budget. This is subject to the council's usual financial monitoring processes. If usual financial monitoring processes identifies there is only enough DFG budget available to meet the mandatory DFG assistance requirements, then the discretionary flexibility will not be utilised for any full or part year where that situation is applicable.

Who will it help?

Any disabled or vulnerable person who has been assessed and referred by Social Care OT Service.

Will it be means-tested?

There will be no formal means test.

How much funding might be available?

There is no maximum funding limit for eligible works for an individual but funding would be only for stairlifts and hoists as assessed as necessary and appropriate.

Will there be a charge against the property?

There will be no land charge registered against the property.

Will there be any conditions attached?

The person must be a permanent resident of Solihull and the property must be their permanent address.

The lift and/or hoist may be provided on a 'loan' basis and therefore required to be returned to Solihull Council if circumstances dictate that it is no longer required.

How to apply

By contacting the Adult Care and Support One Front Door Team:

Tel: 01217048007

Email: ccadults@solihull.gov.uk

Funding will be awarded on a case-by-case basis as outlined above.

B6 – Second Carer Homes Grants

Aims

In cases where families separate, and a court order provides that residency of the relevant disabled child is split between two households, this grant may be awarded to enable both homes to be adapted. Mandatory DFG is only available to the 'sole or main residence of the disabled person, this being determined by which party receives child benefit.

The inclusion of this grant means that adaptations may be provided in a second home, which is not the primary residence of the disabled child, but which facilitates access to necessary visits and/or respite care (including foster placements or care provided by wider family members on a regular basis as supported by social care). The Authority will consider the details of any court order and specifically the allocation of time spent with separate parents/guardians in determining eligibility for assistance. No specific percentage split is proposed in this policy as each case will be reviewed on its own merits.

Factors to be considered include the specific details of any order, likely time to be spent at each property, whether the child will stay overnight at the property and for what period. Advice will be taken from the Occupational therapist and Children's Social Worker where relevant.

How will it be funded?

Second Carer Homes Grants would be funded from the DFG Budget. This is subject to the council's usual financial monitoring processes. If usual financial monitoring processes identifies there is only enough DFG budget available to meet the mandatory DFG assistance requirements, then the discretionary flexibility will not be utilised for any full or part year where that situation is applicable.

Who will it help?

Any disabled or vulnerable person under the age of 19 who has been assessed and referred by Social Care OT Service.

Will it be means-tested?

There will be no formal means test as the eligible person is a child and therefore not subject to the mandatory DFG means test.

How much funding might be available?

The maximum funding available is £30,000

Will there be a charge against the property?

The Mandatory DFG land charge will apply to works funded through this grant.

Will there be any conditions attached?

The person must be a permanent resident of Solihull and the property must be their permanent address.

A maximum of one application per eligible child may be made.

How to apply

By contacting the Adult Care and Support One Front Door Team:

Tel: 01217048007

Email: ccadults@solihull.gov.uk

Funding will be awarded on a case-by-case basis as outlined above.

B7 – Safe and Secure Grant

Aims

The purpose of this grant is to cover essential repairs that are needed to facilitate a DFG. Examples of eligible works may include:

- Water supply, drainage and heating issues
- Electrical and gas safety
- Repairs or modifications to stairs, floors and steps
- Safety and security repairs

How will it be funded?

Safe and Secure grants would be funded from the DFG Budget. This is subject to the council's usual financial monitoring processes. If usual financial monitoring processes identifies there is only enough DFG budget available to meet the mandatory DFG assistance requirements, then the discretionary flexibility will not be utilised for any full or part year where that situation is applicable.

Who will it help?

Funding will be available subject to the following eligibility criteria:

- The applicant must be the owner-occupier of the property
- The applicant must have owned the property for a minimum period of five years
- The applicant must have been assessed as eligible for a Mandatory DFG
- The works required must be necessary to facilitate the safe provision of the works recommended under the Mandatory DFG
- The applicant must meet the following financial criteria:
- Be in receipt of:
 - Income Support
 - Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - Support under Part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit (as long as there is no entitlement to Working Tax Credit and the household income does not exceed £16,190 as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs)
 - Universal Credit
 - Council Tax Support (not single person reduction)
 - The applicant is aged 55 years or over and their income level is below the income tax threshold

Works required must not be eligible for funding from any other sources, such as insurance policies or owner resources.

DFG applicants who have a means tested contribution of less than £5,000 may also be considered for assistance on a case-by-case basis, as agreed by the Project Manager, Aids and Adaptations.

Will it be means-tested?

There will be no formal means test.

How much funding might be available?

The maximum funding available is £10,000 per application.

Will there be a charge against the property?

The Safe and Secure Grant will be registered, in full, as a local land charge against the property for a period of 10 years and will be recovered on the sale or transfer of the property, subject to rules regarding exempt sales.

Note – this is separate to the £10,000 recoverable DFG which expires at 10 years from certification of works completion.

Will there be any conditions attached?

The person must be a permanent resident of Solihull and the property must be their permanent address.

Conditions restricting future use and ownership of the property – the following additional conditions will apply where the Council has made an award of Safe and Secure Grant funding;

- The owner will notify the Council in writing if a relevant disposal of the property is proposed.
- The owner of the property will provide, within 21 days of a written notice from the Council, a statement confirming the ownership and occupancy of the dwelling. If the property has been sold or transferred the statement will include the date of transfer of ownership.
- Funding will be registered as a charge against the property and will be repayable on sale or transfer of the property, subject to exempt sales. The charge will be binding on successors in title.
- It is a condition of funding that where an owner makes a relevant disposal of the dwelling, other than an exempt disposal, the funding shall be repayable subject to above.
- If a relevant disposal takes place after a period of 10 years after the certified date of completion of works, no amount shall be recovered which, after

repayment of all charges registered against the property, results in owner(s) having a residual equity of less than £10,000. No account will be taken by the Council of charges subsequent to the charges registered by the Council.

- If the property is transferred, or the sale price does not reflect the market price, the Council will have the right to seek an independent valuation of the market value, which will be binding on both parties, in order to recover the grant repayable.

A maximum of one application in any 5-year period.

How to apply

By contacting the Adult Care and Support One Front Door Team:

Tel: 01217048007

Email: ccadults@solihull.gov.uk

Funding will be awarded on a case-by-case basis as outlined above.

B8 – Small Adaptations Grant (Discretionary)

Aims

Applications for adaptation works costing less than £8,000 whether for single or multiple adaptations; other than internal stairlifts or ceiling track hoists, which will be treated separately, will **not** be subject to means testing.

How will it be funded?

Small Adaptations Grants would be funded from the DFG Budget. This is subject to the council's usual financial monitoring processes. If usual financial monitoring processes identifies there is only enough DFG budget available to meet the mandatory DFG assistance requirements, then the discretionary flexibility will not be utilised for any full or part year where that situation is applicable.

Who will it help?

Any disabled or vulnerable person who has been assessed and referred by Social Care OT Service.

Will it be means-tested?

There will be no formal means test.

How much funding might be available?

The maximum value of the works eligible for funding under this scheme is £8,000

Will there be a charge against the property?

The Mandatory DFG land charge will apply. Meaning that conditions will apply where the grant exceeds £5,000 and will be registered as a local land charge and will be repayable on the sale or transfer of the property within 10 years of the certified date.

Will there be any conditions attached?

The person must be a permanent resident of Solihull and the property must be their permanent address.

How to apply

By contacting the Adult Care and Support One Front Door Team:

Tel: 01217048007

Email: ccadults@solihull.gov.uk

Funding will be awarded on a case-by-case basis as outlined above.