

Housing Executive

Disabled Facilities Grant

**We can provide a grant to
adapt the home of a disabled
adult or child.**

**An Occupational Therapist
must recommend the work.**

This information is available on request in accessible formats, including but not limited to large print, audio formats, Braille and main minority ethnic languages.

For more information please contact your local Grants office, details are provided at the back of this leaflet.

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About the Grants process / journey

A Disabled Facilities Grant is a government grant which helps towards the cost of making changes to a private sector home.

The Housing Executive administers grant funding on behalf of the Department for Communities.

For Disabled Facilities Grants, we make grant-aid available to eligible private home owners, private landlords and private tenants for works necessary to fulfil an Occupational Therapist's recommendation, to ensure a disabled person's home is safe and accessible.

Works can include improved access into the home, bathroom, living room and bedroom. Adding an extra bathroom or disabled showering facilities, adapting lighting or heating controls or upgrading a heating system to one operated by a switch.



The Grant Applicant or their appointed representative are responsible for initiating the grant process, ensuring all statutory approvals are in place, choosing, appointing and managing their contractor to complete the works and providing all relevant documentation required by us.

Your Occupational Therapist and local grants office will provide support to guide you through the grants process.

Please note we will refer to an Occupational Therapist as an OT throughout this leaflet.

The grant process steps are listed below.

You'll need to complete **steps 1,4,6,8, and 10.**

- 1** To start, arrange a visit from an OT.
- 2** The OT will assess you in your home and, if adaptations are necessary, refer you to your local Housing Executive Grants Office.
- 3** A dedicated Case Officer and Technical Officer will talk to you about your grant application.
- 4** You may have to contribute towards the cost of the work. This may require a 'means test' to be completed.
- 5** Our Technical Officer will visit your home to survey your property.

- 6** You'll be sent an information pack.
We will advise you if you need an architect.
- 7** Plans of your proposed adaptations will be assessed by the Grants Office and your OT.
- 8** All documentation requested should be submitted to the Grants Office.
- 9** Our technical team will work out how much grant-aid we can approve.
- 10** We will send you an approval pack and you can appoint a contractor to start the work.
- 11** Payment of grant-aid - a Technical Officer will visit your home to inspect work before a payment is made.
- 12** Final payment can be made when all required documentation has been submitted and your OT is content that the completed work meets the recommendation.



1

To start, arrange a visit from an OT.

You cannot apply directly to the Housing Executive.

There is an open OT referral service available within your local Health and Social Care Trust. You can contact them, your GP or social worker to start the process.

Explain that you require an assessment by an OT to identify adaptations for your home as a disabled person to ensure safe independent living.



2

The OT will assess you in your home and, if adaptations are necessary, refer you to your local Housing Executive Grants Office.

An OT will contact you to make an appointment to visit you in your home.

During this appointment your OT will talk to you about potential adaptations, assess you and discuss possible options which may make your home more accessible.

Following assessment, the OT may make a recommendation for adaptations that will increase the accessibility of your home, and send it to your local Housing Executive Grants Office.



3

A dedicated Case Officer and Technical Officer will talk to you about your grant application.

The Housing Executive will assign a dedicated Case Officer and Technical Officer to manage your case.

These Officers will remain your points of contact and sources of information throughout your grants journey.

Other members of our team will also be happy to help you at any point of the process.

Contact details can be found at the back of this leaflet and at the bottom of most letters the Housing Executive send you.



4

You may have to contribute towards the cost of the work. This may require a ‘means test’ to be completed.

You may have to make a financial contribution (payment) towards the approved cost of grant-aid works at your property. Each household’s contribution will depend on their financial circumstances and who the adaptation is for.

Your Case Officer will contact you to assess if you have a financial contribution to make to the grant-aid work. We call this means test a ‘Test of Resources’.

Adaptations for a child: If you receive Child Benefit for this child we do not carry out a ‘Test of Resources’ and you will move straight from step 3 to step 5 of the process.

Please note: If the Test of Resources calculates that no contribution is required, you may still have to make a financial contribution towards getting the works completed (see FAQ section). If your contribution exceeds the estimated cost of the works, no grant funding will be made available.



5

Our Technical Officer will visit your home to survey your property.

Once the 'Test of Resources' is complete and we tell you in writing what, if any, financial contribution you will make to the grant-aid works, we will arrange a 'Preliminary Inspection'.

Your Technical Officer will carry out a full inspection of the property and its surrounding outside area. This will determine if the works proposed by your OT are reasonable and practical.

You will receive a letter detailing the day and approximate time of the preliminary inspection.

If you will not be available, contact your Case Officer immediately to rearrange this appointment.



6

You'll be sent an information pack.

We will advise you if you need an architect.

Your Technical Officer will create a list of the works which will be necessary to complete the recommendation. This is called a List of Grant-Aided Works.

This is **not approval** to start works.

If the recommendation is a:

Minor adaptation – you may not need an architect if there is a small amount of works to be completed. Where possible we will provide a proposed plan to help complete what's been agreed with your OT and details of the amount of grant-aid you might expect to receive.

Major adaptation - this is a larger scale of works and you will need an architect. The List of Grant-Aided Works will contain information for your architect



to produce proposed plans to meet your OT's recommendation. We will direct you to the 'Housing Adaptations Design Toolkit Specification' to help with the design and your Technical Officer will be on-hand to advise. At this stage we will not be able to give you an indication of the amount of grant-aid you could expect.

Note: Your information pack will contain details of other support available to you to assist with progressing your grant application.

Fees may be incurred at this point which you may have to pay. Once work has started these fees can be reimbursed with the first interim payment (see FAQ section).

It is important you arrange for any information that we request to be sent in by the deadline given. If it is not returned, or no contact is made, your case may be closed, and a new OT recommendation may be required to open a new application.



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Plans of your proposed adaptations will be assessed by the Grants Office and your OT.

Minor Adaptation

Where no architect is required, a proposed plan will be produced by our technical team. This proposed plan will be sent to your OT for review and approval.

Major Adaptation

If the adaptation will take considerable work, you will need to employ an architect to provide a proposed plan to meet your OT's recommendations.

Your Technical Officer will work with you and the OT to ensure the proposed architect's plans are approved promptly. They will also advise on what is considered 'enhanced' work and works not eligible for grant-aid.

Once your OT has approved the proposed plans, you will be asked to instruct your architect to arrange any statutory approvals as necessary.



8

All documentation requested should be submitted to the Grants Office.

To move your application on to the next stage you must ensure we have received all of the information originally requested in the List of Grant-Aided Works pack.

These may include, but are not limited to, statutory approvals such as:

- Full Planning Approval Certificate
- Stamped approved Planning Permission Plans
- Building Control Approval Certificate
- Stamped approved Building Control Plans
- NI Water Build Over Agreement

Contact your Case Officer if you need a reminder of the documents to be submitted or help with the process.

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Our technical team will work out how much grant-aid we can approve.

Once you send us the documents we requested, our technical team will use the basic approved plan to calculate the amount of grant-aid.

The amount of grant-aid approved is based on a 'Schedule of Rates' which reflect fair market rates and is used by all Technical Officers when costing grant work.

You will receive an itemised List of Grant-Aided Works, with details of the amount of grant-aid the Housing Executive has approved. This will fulfil the OT's recommendation. The total amount for the items on this list, including the allowed fees, is the total grant-aid approved, minus any contribution you may be expected to make (see step 4).

Any works which are classed as 'enhanced' are not grant-aided. It is your responsibility to pay your contractor for these works.



If your appointed contractor quotes a higher price than the total grant-aid approved, you must arrange to pay the difference.

It is important to note there is no grant-aid for redecoration and items may not be replaced 'like for like'.

For example, if doors are removed to improve wheelchair user access, we will not replace these doors 'like for like'. We will provide an amount of grant-aid as per the schedule of rates to install wider doors. If you wish to hang doors which cost more than the grant-aid awarded, then this is classed as 'enhanced'. It is your responsibility to pay your contractor the extra amount.



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We will send you an approval pack and you can appoint a contractor to start the work.

This pack gives you a clear breakdown of the offer of grant-aid and detailed notes to help explain the remainder of the grants process. Please read the approval letter and accompanying notes carefully.

From the date on the approval pack letter, you have six months to start work and twelve months to complete. If you do not start or complete works within the timeframes specified your grant is at risk of being cancelled.

If your works cost over £10,000, you must appoint a warranted builder or put a written contract in place with your chosen contractor.

Within the approval pack, your Case Officer will request documents that are required to proceed with your grant. It is your responsibility to send completed information to us when needed. This will ensure prompt payment of the grant at interim and final payment stages.

If you have any questions, please contact your Case Officer.

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Payment of grant-aid - a Technical Officer will visit your home to inspect work before a payment is made.

Once work has started your contractor may request a payment when some work has been completed.

Interim payments are based on the amount of work completed. At a minimum, 25% of the grant-aided works must be completed to enable the Housing Executive to make a payment.

You should complete the 'Interim Payment Claim form' and 'Payment of Grant Monies form' from your approval pack and send them to your Case Officer.

Your Technical Officer will visit your home to make sure enough of the grant-aided works have been satisfactorily completed to allow an interim payment to be made. It is your responsibility to ensure you are satisfied with the quality of the works completed.



REMINDER: The Housing Executive administers grant-aid. We do not get involved in contractual issues between applicants and their chosen contractor.



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Final payment can be made when all required documentation has been submitted and your OT is content that the completed work meets the recommendation.

When you tell us that your work is completed your Technical Officer will carry out a final inspection. They will visit your home to make sure the grant-aided works have been completed.

Your OT must also visit and confirm that the work completed is satisfactory to meet their recommendation.

If the Technical Officer or your OT believes that the works are not satisfactorily completed, a snag list will be created and issued to you. The issues identified must be resolved by your contractor before final payment is made.

Once any snags are completed, our Technical Officer and your OT have signed off the works and you have sent us all required documentation (e.g. Building Control Completion Certificate), the final payment can be processed.

REMINDER: The Technical Officer's inspection is to ensure you that the grant-aided works have been completed. We do not inspect the quality of the works; this is your responsibility.

This will complete your grant journey.

Frequently asked Questions

What's the maximum grant?

Depending on the work required, and your financial circumstances, you may get up to £35,000 (including fees) towards a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). There may be discretion to raise grant-aid to a maximum of £70,000 (including fees).

Who receives the grant-aid payment?

A Payment of Grant Monies form will be sent out with the information pack. The applicant is responsible for deciding who they want grant-aid paid to.

For example, all grant-aid payments can be made to the contractor or the applicant and professional fees directly to an architect.

This form is a legally binding document and in order to revoke this assignment, agreement is required by all parties named on the Payment of Grant Monies form.

Further guidance is available from your Case Officer where required.

Who is responsible for choosing a contractor?

You are responsible for choosing and appointing a contractor to carry out any required works.

Your Case Officer can provide you with written guidance on choosing a contractor.

Does the grant-aid cover 100% of the cost of the works?

No, there may be instances where the entire cost of the works proposed by your OT may not be covered by grant-aid. Examples include:

- Where the maximum grant allowance has been reached no additional funding can be given.
- You may need to make a financial contribution to the approved cost of the works – we will complete a means test (see step 4).
- There may be a difference in what your builder charges you to complete the works and what the Housing Executive can pay as grant-aid.
- You may choose to have some extra work done where no grant-aid is applicable. We refer to this extra work as ‘enhanced’.
- Any works which are classed as ‘enhanced’ are not grant-aided. It is your responsibility to pay your contractor for these works.

Any difference in the contractors cost and the grant-aid award is payable by you.

Can I start work before the Housing Executive gives approval?

No. If works start before the Housing Executive has given written approval to start (refer to step 10), then your application is at risk of being cancelled with no grant-aid funding provided.

Can I make changes to the plans after they have been approved?

Yes, however any changes to plans following grant approval must first be agreed by the Housing Executive. This also includes unforeseen or additional works required.

If changes are made without the Housing Executive's approval, this will affect the payment of grant-aid.

What are fees?

Fees are professional fees required to be paid throughout the grant journey.

These may include, but are not limited to, Architect, Engineer, Planning, Building Control, NI Water and Title fees.

If you have any questions, please ask.

When are fees paid?

You should be prepared to pay professional fees upfront.

Your Technical Officer can inform you about the maximum values allowed for fee reimbursement.

The Housing Executive will usually only reimburse fees after work has started and at the first payment stage, normally not less than 25% of the work should be completed.

Fees may be reimbursed before work has started in exceptional circumstances.

Can I get other works carried out at my property at the same time as the works for a Disabled Facilities Grant?

Yes. It is not unusual for an applicant to undertake additional works on their property given that they will have a contractor onsite.

Please discuss your ideas with the Housing Executive, your contractor, and architect if applicable, before creating plans.

It will be your responsibility to pay your chosen contractor for the 'enhanced' work you decide to complete.

We will advise on what work may or may not attract grant-aid. If the cost for ‘enhanced’ works is more than £6,000, we will ask you for a signed written statement to explain how you will fund the ‘enhanced’ works.

Will items in my home be replaced as like for like?

No. It is not unusual for an applicant to choose to use materials which would not be paid for entirely through grant-aid. This is your home, and you decide on the final finish.

For example, you may wish to have 6” skirting but grant-aid from the Housing Executive will only allow a monetary value for 4” skirting. Perhaps you have electric fittings with a brushed metal finish, the Housing Executive’s grant-aid will only allow for white.

Such changes in the specification are considered ‘enhanced’ by the Housing Executive. They are your choice, and you must arrange to pay your chosen contractor directly for any additional cost above the grant-aid approved. Your approval pack (issued in step 10) will breakdown the grant-aid awarded.

How long does it take?

Each case is unique, and many factors will affect the length of time a case will take.

The Housing Executive aims to complete the areas it has control over promptly. However, there are many areas outside our control.

We rely on you, your architect, statutory agencies and your OT to work with us to progress your case.

<p>Belfast & South East Area The Housing Centre 2 Adelaide Street Belfast BT2 8PB</p>	<p>03448 920 900* Belfast.grants@nihe.gov.uk</p>
<p>Derry/Londonderry Richmond Chambers Derry/Londonderry BT48 6QP</p>	<p>03448 920 900* Derry-londonderry@nihe.gov.uk</p>
<p>West (Omagh) MacAllister House Woodside Avenue Omagh BT79 7BP</p>	<p>03448 920 900* West.grants@nihe.gov.uk</p>
<p>West (Enniskillen) Riverview House Head Street Enniskillen BT74 7DA</p>	<p>03448 920 900* West.grants@nihe.gov.uk</p>
<p>South 34/35 Boat Street, Newry BT34 2DB</p>	<p>03448 920 900* South.grants@nihe.gov.uk</p>
<p>North East Twickenham House Mount Street Ballymena BT43 6BP</p>	<p>03448 920 900* Northeast.grants@nihe.gov.uk</p>

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