

Disabled Facilities Grant PCH Recharge briefing

2023/2024 – Community Connections



This Executive Decision relates to Disabled Facilities Grant allocation specified via the Better Care Fund for 2023/24.

The Council has a statutory duty to approve mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) for major adaptations. This work supports people of all ages to live in suitable housing so they can remain independent, thereby helping to contain the potential increase in costs to Social Care Services whilst also striving to reduce hospital admissions.

The legislation governing DFGs is the 1996 Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act. DFGs are mandatory and are available from local authorities in England and Wales, subject to a means test unless in scope of discretionary works. The grants are to provide adaptations, to the home environment to enable independence and keep people living in their own homes, in safety and with dignity.

The DFG allocation is specified via the Better Care Fund (BCF) and is for the provision of adaptations to disabled people's homes to help them to live independently for longer. Following the approach taken by the Department of Health in 2015-16, the DFG has again been included within the BCF for 2023/24. This continual commitment is to encourage areas to think strategically about the use of home aids/adaptations, use of technologies to support people in their own homes, and to take a joined-up approach to improving outcomes across health, social care and housing.

At the start of financial year 2023/24, Plymouth's allocation was maintained at the same level as 22/23 at £2,813,781. Notification received by Plymouth City Council on 07/09/23 from the Department of Levelling up Housing and Communities shows a further financial commitment into Plymouth from the Autumn Budget via the BCF of £245,531.

In addition to this additional funding Plymouth Community Homes have continued their agreement to fund the first £5,000 to all DFG adaptations in their properties excluding installation of stairlifts, with an annual maximum of £400,000 in year 2023/2024.

In year 2022/2023, £360,463.62 was invoiced to PCH as a result of the completion of 107 adaptations in their properties facilitated by Plymouth City Council

Invoices are produced retrospectively each quarter upon completion of works. DFG's are mandatory governed by the 1996 Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act. DFG's greatly improve quality of life for clients, their careers and family members and effective use of the grants will help contain the potential increase in associated costs to Social Care Services.

The recording of case completion is a display of the amount of homes where all adaptations required have been completed and final payment made. A referral received frequently requires multiple adaptations to be conducted to achieve this status and as such it is worth noting that in every completion multiple adaptations are likely to have been facilitated by Community Connections. Adaptations range depending on client need, however examples range from bathroom, stair lift, through floor lift, ramp, kitchen adaptation and door widening to full extensions and loft conversions.

The Dynamic Purchasing System embedded in 2019 has continually been developed with our partner in delivery INCIC and will continue to be used in 2023/24. The system encourages local tradespeople, who have displayed that they are competent and professional, to tender for works offered by the local authority on behalf of the client. Works carried out are done so with an insurance backed warranty for 2 years and clients are given the opportunity to extend this cover, outside of the grant, should they wish. Utilising this system coming out of the current COVID-19 crisis will enable registered contractors to begin their business recovery. Works being undertaken currently by Community Connections will see a large upload of works to the system, enabling contractors to be prepared, supply chains checked and clients to be given piece of mind.

Looking forwards in 2023/24 we understand that the demand for DFG's is going to be significant. Community Connections are continually reviewing this demand and in preparation are bringing in 2 additional resources to ensure that complex cases continue to get the oversight they require and other cases remain progressed as swiftly and seamlessly as possible. We will continually review this during the year to ensure where possible the team meets the city's need.

Community Connections will continue to use a priority rating based up the date of referral and the priority of need rating given to the client by our partner Livewell South West.