

Disabled Facilities Grant Capital Funding Briefing

2025/2026 – Community Connections



Overview

This Executive Decision relates to the allocation of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for 2025/26, funded through the Better Care Fund (BCF). The Council has a statutory duty under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 to approve mandatory DFGs for major adaptations, supporting individuals of all ages to live independently in safe, suitable housing. This contributes to reducing pressures on social care services and preventing hospital admissions.

Legislative and Strategic Context

DFGs are mandatory and subject to a means test unless covered by discretionary provisions. They fund essential adaptations that enable individuals to remain in their homes with dignity and independence. Since 2015/16, DFGs have been included in the BCF to encourage integrated, strategic planning across health, social care, and housing.

Plymouth's Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) allocation for 2025/26 has increased to £3,491,445, up from £3,069,132 in 2024/25. This will be supplemented by a carry-forward of £1,014,173.52, although £109,877.85 will be deducted to reflect unspent funds allocated for adaptations in Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) properties. The carry-forward is largely attributed to delays stemming from COVID-19, Brexit-related supply chain disruptions, and the increasing complexity of adaptation works.

In addition, Plymouth Community Homes has committed a further £400,000 to support the delivery of adaptations for residents in their properties, reinforcing the partnership approach to meeting local housing and care needs.

Delivery Performance and Pipeline

In 2024/25, Community Connections completed 280 cases, delivering 424 individual adaptations. Each case typically involves multiple interventions, ranging from stairlifts and ramps to full extensions and loft conversions.

As of the start of 2025/26:

- 98 active cases are ongoing, with a committed spend of £1,204,125.20
- 217 validated cases are ready to progress, with a forecast cost of £1,820,900
- 114 pre-validation cases are in the pipeline, estimated at £873,900
- 142 cases are within Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) properties

Procurement and Quality Assurance

The Dynamic Purchasing System, introduced in 2019, continues to be used to engage competent local contractors through competitive tendering. All works are covered by a two-year insurance-backed warranty, with optional extensions available to clients.

Forward Planning and Risk Management

Demand for DFGs in 2025/26 is expected to exceed the available budget. Community Connections will manage this through:

- Ongoing review of validated cases to prioritise based on need and budget
- Continuation of the Discretionary Funding Panel for high-cost cases
- Engagement with PCH to actively engage with adaptations in their properties to reduce associated costs.
- Supplier engagement to secure best market prices
- Rigorous value-for-money assessments for all proposed works

- Expansion of fast-track stairlift delivery to reduce waiting times and improve client safety
- Implementation of a post-completion customer feedback process to inform service improvements
- Implement new case management systems to reduce the burdens on teams and increase customer satisfaction

Community Connections will continue to prioritise cases based on referral date and clinical need, as assessed by Livewell Southwest and Children's Social Care.