

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Adaptations - Dynamic Purchasing System

Briefing



The Council has a statutory duty to approve mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) for major adaptations. This work helps people (including children) to live independently in their own homes, thereby helping to contain the potential increase in costs to Social Care Services, and maintain people living in their own homes.

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. The grants are to provide adaptations to the home environment to promote independence and keep people living in their own homes in safety and with dignity for longer.

The DFG allocation is specified via the Better Care Fund (BCF) and is for the provision of adaptations to disabled people's homes. Following the approach taken by the Department of Health in 2015-16, the DFG has again be included within the BCF for 2017/18, and is anticipated to remain for 18/19. This 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. For 2017/18, Plymouth's allocation was £2.126m in total, an increase from £1.954m in 2016/17. It is forecast that over £600k will be spend on Bathroom adaptations alone, at an average cost of £4400. Bathroom adaptations allow elderly and disabled people to access showering facilities that meet their everyday need and reduce risk to health and of injury. We would therefore anticipate to spend approximately £3m adapting bathrooms across the city over the next 5 years.

Home adaptations can be a welcome intervention for many, enabling people to live independently and safely in their own homes. This work requires assessment from an Occupational Therapist to identify the changes required to the home environment to meet the needs of the individual, and each adaptation is bespoke to the situation. However, there are standard items that can be grouped together to provide a solution to each grant recipient offering a simplified method of procurement for each adaptation. On 1st May 2014 Plymouth City Council launched the Devon and Cornwall Bathroom Adaptation Framework agreement, a standardised schedule of rates offering a reduction in average cost, due to framework including Devon & Cornwall, and a simplified method for procuring bathroom adaptations. The framework reduced timescales and offered quality control of all work produced. This framework was for 2 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years. This brings this framework to an end on 31st April 2018, and as such we have been working to find further solutions to procuring bathroom adaptations, and bring more innovation to this area of work.

Following initial discussions with PCC Procurement, it was felt that an external specialist was necessary to support in the delivery of a new procurement method. The existing framework brought benefits to all who used it, however, it did not offer a sound operating model to each authority using it, bringing inconsistencies, and it did not allow new products to be introduced and had no mechanism for replacing or introducing suppliers or contractors. This meant that the framework was limiting when additional need or opportunity presented. We have been working with Independence Community Interest Company (In.CIC) for over a year to develop a Dynamic Purchasing System for Adaptations, and will be focusing on bathroom adaptations in the first instance. The Dynamic Purchasing System will be divided into 'lots' for each type of work that could be required and therefore tendered through the system as and when required by each participating authority, thus providing opportunity in the market and seeking solutions across the country. The 'lots' will include, for example, ramps, internal and external access equipment, hoisting systems and professional services, e.g. specialist design. In.CIC is a TrustMark scheme operator that offers full compliance for domestic consumers and support for authorities participating in the Dynamic Procurement System, for example ensuring Construction Design and Management Regulations 2017 compliance.

A Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) is a completely electronic system of limited duration which is established to purchase commonly used Goods, Services and Works. A DPS remains open throughout its duration for the admission of suppliers and installers who satisfy the selection criteria specified by the Contracting Authority (PCC). This means we can be more responsive to changes in customer demand and funding. It will also be possible to introduce new products and thus not preclude our customers from innovative solutions as per the existing framework. We have set key performance indicators to ensure a robust monitoring system and a methodology for providing good service to our customers, whilst offering them consumer protection through the TrustMark accreditation.

We are currently working with Cornwall Council, and Devon District Councils locally to introduce the DPS. In addition to this the DPS will be using the existing 'Plymouth Model' and has potential to be utilised by other Local Authorities across the country, thus taking advantage of economies of scale. Discussion is underway with Local Authorities in the West Midlands, and London Boroughs. The 'Plymouth Model' was designed by the team in 2007 and was further developed to provide the framework in 2014. It links trade rates, acceptable task times, material costs and overheads and profit to provide a fully priced schedule of standardised items. Competition is undertaken at the initial stages thus reducing time delays during the working of the DPS.

Utilising the 'Plymouth Model' via the DPS will allow us (and other authorities) to procure adaptations swiftly, ensuring compliance and standardisation. As the DPS is fully electronic schedules can be produced on site in the customers home and works ordered and managed from a device, thus supporting The Way we Work project.

Engagement events have been conducted with Local Authorities and Providers to support them in this process.