

Disabled Facilities Grant process

Making an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) can be confusing, therefore, in order to help you through this process and to answer any questions or queries you may have, please see the information below.

Occupational Therapist (OT) recommendation

Following an assessment of your needs by an OT, a formal recommendation may be made which details the necessary adaptations that are needed to your property to make it suitable for use by the disabled person. If the adaptations can be funded through a DFG, the OT will forward a copy of the recommendation to West Suffolk Council.

Initial contact

On receiving the OT referral, we will contact you to discuss your requirements and eligibility for a DFG, which is a means tested grant. The means test is prescribed by central government and currently looks at your income and balances this against any benefits you receive. Therefore, depending on your personal circumstances, you may need to provide information on your finances in order for a means test to be carried out and any contribution that you may need to make towards the cost of your adaptation can be determined. We may carry out a provisional means test over the phone.

Completing the application and consent forms

If a DFG is to be offered, the council will receive details of the works to be funded, as recommended by your OT, an application form and consent forms which will need to be completed and returned, together with your financial evidence, if required, to the address as stated in your offer letter.

We will complete the means test, if required, and will advise you in writing if you are eligible for financial assistance or if you have a financial contribution to make towards the cost of the adaptations.

Owner's certificate

As part the application we have to confirm that the person who is stated as the owner of the property is named on the deeds. We will contact the land registry on your behalf, to confirm these details. If you are the owner, an owner's certificate must be completed to confirm that it is the disabled person's intention to live in the property for period of five years after the completion of the works. In addition, there may be a local land charge placed on the property for a period of 10 years from the date of completion.

Local land charge entry

The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) process allows the council to place a limited charge on adapted properties of owner occupiers, if it is sold within 10 years. This is only applicable where the total cost of the works exceeds £5,000. The charge is limited to a maximum £10,000. If, therefore, your adaptation works exceed £5,000, the council will make arrangements to place a local land charge entry against your property address. This charge will detail the cost of the works exceeding £5000 up to the maximum limit of £10,000. The charges will last for 10 years, starting from the date your works were signed off as complete.

If you are a tenant

Please provide details of your landlord on the application form. We will make contact with your landlord to confirm that the adaptations can be undertaken.

All consent forms must be signed and returned with the application before the grant can be finally approved.

Obtaining your quotes

You will be required to provide two detailed, itemised quotations from reputable builders using the Occupational Therapist's drawings and recommendations.

We can supply a list of contractors to assist you if required, however, it is provided for information only to assist you in identifying a contractor to carry out the adaptation works as recommended by your Occupational Therapist. West Suffolk Council cannot provide any guarantee as to the personal or professional reputation of any of the contractors on the list or offer any guarantee or warranty as the standard and quality of their work.

Should you require assistance in obtaining detailed plans, specifications, estimates and ongoing supervision of the works, you may wish to submit your application through a home improvement agency. Further details of which can be found by visiting: <https://www-foundations.uk.com>. The home improvement agency may charge a fee based on the total net cost of the grant eligible works, and this fee would be included within the grant, providing that the cost of fees and eligible works do not exceed the maximum grant available at time of grant approval.

Any works relating to gas appliances will need to be carried out by gas safe registered engineers. Any additions or modifications to electrical installations must be carried out by a competent and qualified electrician.

Certain works will be VAT exempt, which will reduce the total costs of works. Your contractor will need to obtain a VAT exempt certificate from you. It is the responsibility of your contractor to determine works that are VAT exempt. If appropriate your contractor will need to submit a zero-rated VAT certificate upon completion of the works and submission of the final invoice.

Please be aware

The adaptations recommended should not be changed without prior consultation with your OT. If your contractor has any queries regarding the scheme you will need to discuss this with your OT and contractor.

The arrangements you make with your contractor form a private contract, to which West Suffolk Council are not a party. West Suffolk Council will not project manage any of the building work. Should any queries arise concerning the quality of the work, they should be taken up with your contractor. Any changes to the scheme must be agreed with your Occupational Therapist.

Approving your Disabled Facilities Grant

On receipt of your completed application form and quotations, we will check the submitted information to ensure that the works are in accordance with the Occupational Therapist's recommendations and that the cost of the works is considered reasonable.

The grant awarded will be for the approved cost of the eligible works, based on the lowest quotation submitted, less any contribution that is required to be made by you as per the means test, up to the maximum grant level. The assessed cost will be detailed on the grant approval.

You should not commence any works that may be eligible for grant before receiving an official letter of approval from the local authority as doing so will jeopardise your eligibility for grant assistance.

If you wish to arrange for some additional works to be carried out, this would be a private arrangement between you and the contractor. The grant will not cover the cost of any extra private works.

Commencement of works

Once you have received your approval documents you can arrange for your contractor to commence work. Please complete and return the commencement certificate which will be enclosed with your approval documents.

Should any additional or unforeseen works be required once the works are underway, these must be agreed with West Suffolk Council prior to commencement in order that the additional costs, if agreed, can be included in the grant.

Completion of works

On completion of works, please fill in the completion certificate to confirm that you are satisfied that the works have been completed in accordance with the agreed recommendations and submit it, with the contractor's final invoice to the council. We

will then contact you and may make an appointment so that they can check the completed works and carry out a post inspection. This post inspection will be for the purpose of ensuring that the works have been completed as per the Occupational Therapist scheme and to ensure grant monies have been spent appropriately.

The quality of work remains a contractual matter between you and your builder and any concerns that you may have must be discussed directly with your contractor.

Payment will only be made:

- on receipt of all final invoices and relevant certification as may be required (where applicable). It is the responsibility of the applicant to request invoices from their contractor/s and submit all invoices and certificates for payment and
- on return of signed completion certificate.

The council will normally arrange to pay your contractors direct, however, if you have a contribution to make towards the cost of the works, this will be deducted from the final payment and you will need to pay this direct to the contractor.