

January 2014

Landlord Grants

As a private landlord you may be eligible for a Landlord Grant to help towards the cost of repairing damage that has a direct detrimental effect on the health, safety, security and welfare of your tenants and that are needed to bring the property up to the Decent Homes Standard.

Am I eligible?

To qualify for the Landlord Grant:

- Your property **MUST** be within the Reading Borough (*Council Tax payable to Reading BC*)
- You **MUST** hold the freehold for the property or have a lease with at least five years unexpired term at the time you apply and
- You **MUST** have been invited to apply by the Council's Environmental Health Team

Why have I been invited to apply for the Landlord Grant?

You will have received an enforcement, prohibition or emergency remedial notice from the Council because your property has been assessed as having Category One hazards by the Council's Environmental Health Team using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

What is HHSRS?

This is a system used by all councils to identify and rate the risk of harm to people living in the property. It looks at 29 health and safety areas.

What does the Landlord Grant cover?

This Grant only covers the cost of work needed to bring your property up to the Decent Homes Standard and ensure it is free from the Category One safety hazards as defined by HHSRS. Examples of work that could be included in the scheme include:

- Fixing safety rails to steep stairs to minimise the risk of falls
- Remedying dampness or other faults to bring the property into a reasonable state of repair
- Installing/updating Central heating and/or providing insulation to ensure the property offers a reasonable degree of thermal comfort
- Providing reasonably modern facilities with three or more of the following:
 - Kitchen less than 20 years old with appropriate space and layout
 - Bathroom less than 30 years old
 - Appropriately located bathrooms and toilets
 - Adequate external noise insulation
- Providing adequate means of escape and a detection system that provides an early warning to occupants in the event of a fire
- Improving security

The Grant also covers essential fees like:

- Agent Fees (maximum 10% total cost of the work)
- Planning Application Fees
- Building Regulation Approval Fees
- Architect Fees

You cannot use the grant to pay for:

- Work not specified by the Council
- Any non-structural works required under Management Regulations that apply to Houses in Multiple Occupation (e.g. cleaning communal areas, removing rubbish, decorating, servicing of gas or electrical installations)

How much grant will I get?

The Grant is for 50% of the cost of the eligible work (min £1,000/max £10,000).

How do I apply?

We will give you a schedule of the eligible works and an application form. You will need to submit:

- Your completed application and owner's certificates
- Proof of National Insurance Number
- Written quotes for the work plus a covering letter on headed stationary from at least two contractors (*letters must be signed, dated and include confirmation of the cost of the work and their VAT Registration number*) plus a copy of their Public Liability Insurance

We will write to you within 21 days to you know if your application has been successful.

Please note: This is a discretionary grant with a limited budget - applications are dealt with in date order and can only be approved if we have funds available.

YOU MUST NOT START WORK BEFORE RECEIVING WRITTEN CONFIRMATION OR YOUR GRANT WILL BE WITHDRAWN

How will the Grant be paid?

You must have your 50% share of the costs before we release the grant money.

We will pay your contractor direct on completion of interim stages and on receipt of their official invoice.

Their invoice must dated, signed and include:

- The company name and address
- The address of the property at which work was carried out
- Details of the works and the cost

Before we make payment

- we will need to see any appropriate certificates and warranties (like electrical or gas safety, building regulation completion etc.)
- we will inspect the work to check the quality of the completed work
- we will ask you to confirm you are satisfied with the quality of the work - if we believe that the work is of a sufficiently good standard we can make payment without your consent.

Unforeseen work

You must contact us if any unforeseen works arise after your grant has been approved and work has started.

We may increase the amount grant awarded to pay for these additional works up to the maximum grant payable.

We won't pay for additional works carried out without prior permission.

If the cost exceeds the grant.

You are responsible for any costs which exceed the maximum grant available.

Conditions attached to this grant

We will register the Landlord Grant as a local land charge against your property.

You must not sell the property, or stop letting the property within five years of the completion of the work.

If you breach these conditions we will take action to reclaim the Grant from you.

Appealing our decision

If we refuse your application we will explain why. If you think we haven't assessed your situation fairly you can ask us to look at your application again. However, you should be aware that:

- we can review your application against our current Grants Policy but we can't change the rules
- we have limited funds - once the money has run out we can't award any further grants until the next financial year (*April - March*).

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the way you have been treated by a member of the council's staff or we haven't done something we said we would do please let us know as soon as possible.

Contact Us

Private Sector Renewal Team

 0118 937 2562

 psra.team@reading.gov.uk

Complaints

 0118 937 3737

 complaints@reading.gov.uk

This information can be made available in alternative formats or other languages on request.