

## Reading Borough Council's Housing Adaptations Policy Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011

	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sustainable Communities Strategy</li> <li>○ Housing Strategy</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Principles of the Policy</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Financial Assistance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Minor Adaptations</li> <li>○ Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants</li> <li>○ Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants</li> <li>○ Financial Assistance Eligibility Criteria</li> </ul>	<b>4</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Exclusions</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Making the best use of the current stock</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Constraints</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Delivering the Service</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Charges</li> <li>○ Referral Scrutiny</li> <li>○ Staging Applications</li> <li>○ Rescindment of Grant Assistance</li> <li>○ Scope of the Policy</li> <li>○ Future Policy Review and Changes</li> <li>○ Local Performance Indicators</li> </ul>	<b>11</b>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Grant Application and Procedures</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Appeals and Complaints</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>10.0</b>	<b>Consultation</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>11.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Procedure for Administering DFG's</li> <li>2. Terms and Conditions applicable to financial assistance</li> <li>3. Acronyms</li> <li>4. Contacts</li> </ol>	<b>17</b>

# Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy

## Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Housing adaptations can often play an important role in enabling disabled people to remain in comfort and safety in their own homes, rather than having to go into residential care. This contributes directly towards meeting CLG's objective of offering everyone the opportunity of a decent home, the Department of Health's objective of improving people's health and well-being and the Liberal Democrat & Conservative Reading's Coalition priority to develop the appropriate policies and high quality funded services to address the increasing service needs of the ageing population.

This Housing Adaptations Policy sets out the framework by which the Council offers adaptations to tenants living in Council properties and residents in the private sector including those living in Registered Social Landlord properties (RSLs).

#### Sustainable Communities Strategy

Reading has established a Local Strategic Partnership, which has prepared the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) 2008-2011

The Strategy sets out the vision and priorities for Reading,

**'Our vision is to maintain and improve the quality of life in Reading, embracing the challenges of a dynamic, inclusive urban community of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Everyone will have the opportunity to benefit from all that Reading can offer. Everyone has a part to play in shaping our future'.**

The SCS recognises the importance of decent housing to deliver this vision, and specifically identifies the 'Decent and Affordable Housing' chapter has a specific target to:

"Improve conditions in the existing housing stock across all tenures, to at least the Governments Decent Homes standard".

#### Reading Borough Council's Housing Strategy 2009-2014

A clear priority in the Housing Strategy is 'supporting people to stay safe and secure in their homes'

For many residents their preferred option is to remain in their homes and Reading Borough Council is committed to supporting people to exercise this choice while staying safe, healthy and secure.

**Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy**  
**Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011**

**2. PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY**

- To ensure that all residents have access to accommodation that enables independent living, privacy and dignity for the individual and their families. This may include offers of alternative accommodation or modifying disabling environments.
- To provide a service that seeks to best meet the needs experienced and identified by the disabled person.
- To ensure that constraints on independent living are not imposed on disabled people by virtue of the construction, layout or design of their homes.
- The process utilises the skills and experience of a wide range of disciplines and includes consultation and choice for the disabled person.
- The appropriateness and acceptability of the adaptation is measured by the extent to which it meets the needs of the individual

Local housing authorities have wide discretionary powers set out in the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 to provide financial assistance for repairs, improvements and adaptations of living accommodation. This includes help with the cost of moving and adapting or improving another property where it is deemed to be a more cost effective option

It is therefore the policy of the Council to examine all the options available to the individual before immediately embarking on plans to adapt the current property where major adaptations are required.

**Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy**  
**Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011**

**3. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The types of assistance available include: -

- Fixed aids such as grab rails,
- Portable adaptations e.g. bathing equipment,
- Mandatory Disabled facilities grants (a means tested grant of up to £30,000) for items such as level access showers, stair lifts etc
- Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants for adaptations outside the scope of a mandatory grant.
- Assistance towards moving to more suitable accommodation.

**3.1 Minor Adaptations**

The Council's policy is to provide simple adaptations i.e. those that cost under £1000 such as grab rails and bathing equipment, direct to the resident without the need to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant.

Where the minor adaptation is carried out in a Council property the adaptation belongs to the Council and will therefore be maintained as part of the cyclical maintenance contract.

Where the minor adaptation is carried out in a private sector property the adaptation belongs to the individual and therefore they will need to maintain it

All minor adaptations will be carried out by Ridgeway Care & Repair's Handihelp service following a recommendation by an Occupational Therapist or Housing Officer to Ridgeway.

**3.2 Major Adaptations**

**3.2.1 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants**

Local authorities are obliged under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, to provide Disabled Facilities Grants to eligible applicants in order to carry out eligible adaptations to their homes to enable them to remain in their homes and live as independently as possible.

Whilst the legislation provides eligible occupiers with the right to a mandatory DFG, landlords have the right to refuse tenant permission to alter or adapt their property so long as the refusal is reasonable in all the circumstances and complies with housing policy.

Where the cost of the work is in excess of the £30,000 grant maximum applicants in the private sector will be expected to fund the difference through their own resources or equity release.

**Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy**  
**Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011**

**3.2.2 Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant**

In addition to the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant the Council is not obliged but may consider Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants depending on funding constraints, legislation and its current housing strategy

The Regulatory Reform Order (Housing Assistance) 2002, gives the Council the power to offer discretionary DFGs to residents in the private sector and are not available to council tenants. (The legislation does not allow the council to use its capital allocation for grants towards improving its own stock.)

Discretionary DFG's are funded from the capital allocation for Private Sector Renewal Grants. Therefore, in considering how best to meet an individual's needs the decision must be justified in relation to the needs of all the households who need help

Individuals affected by the decision to limit discretionary DFG assistance will be offered advice and support regarding other options, which may be available.

- Funding through equity release such as the House Proud scheme
- Funding from Social Services under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. Assistance may be available direct via provision of equipment, or loan.
- Assistance in applying for charitable sources of funding.  
All discretionary DFG's are subject to a land charge for a period of five years.



**Reading Borough Council's Housing Adaptations Policy**  
**Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011**

**3.2.3 Financial Assistance Eligibility Criteria**

Type of Assistance	Eligibility Criteria	Eligible Works	Non-Eligible Works	Conditions
<p><b>Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants</b>                      (Max £30,000 plus up to £5,000 discretionary assistance to pay for architects, agents and other ancillary costs where the cost of the actual adaptation work is up to the grant maximum)</p>	<p>Means tested for over 18 years old. Not means tested for those under 18 years</p> <p>Must be registered or eligible to be registered as disabled under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. Usually receiving an allowance or benefit for disability</p> <p>Can be an owner, tenant (with at least 5 years of the tenancy left to run) or a landlord applying on behalf of a disabled tenant.</p> <p>A relative who fits these criteria may apply on behalf of someone who lives in their home or as part of their household</p> <p>Any type or age of property.</p>	<p>Works recommended by an Occupational Therapist (OT) and agreed by the Disabled Facilities Advisory Group (DFAG)</p> <p>Works required because of the disabled person's condition, for facilitating access, making the building or dwelling safe, facilitating adequate bedroom, bathroom and/or kitchen facilities. Providing suitable heating installations.</p> <p>Facilitating and enabling a disabled person to care for dependent residents.</p>	<p>Works not supported by an OT or Private Sector Renewal &amp; Adaptations Officer (PSR&amp;A Officer)</p> <p>Works that do not relate to the disabled person's medical and/or independence needs.</p> <p>Major Adaptations (extensions) where the existing property can be adapted to meet identified needs.</p> <p>Works that have already been started or completed</p> <p>Scooter storage</p>	<p>Works must be agreed and signed off as 'necessary and appropriate' by the OT and 'reasonable and practicable' by the PSR&amp;A Officer</p> <p>Works must be carried out within 12 months of approval</p> <p>For grants over £5,000 awarded to owner occupiers a charge of up to £10,000 is secured on the property, to be repaid if the property is sold within 10 years</p> <p>Council Tenants in receipt of major adaptations (over £5,000) will have their transfer applications placed on the lowest priority band for housing for a period of 5 years unless significant reasons for a transfer can be shown as necessary</p>

## Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011

Type of Assistance	Eligibility Criteria	Eligible Works	Non-Eligible Works	Conditions
Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants	<p>Private sector residents only, not including RSL tenants</p> <p>Means tested for over 18 years old.</p> <p>Must be registered or eligible to be registered as disabled under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.</p> <p>Usually receiving an allowance or benefit for disability</p>	<p>Fees (estate agents, solicitors, removals surveys) for moving to more suitable property and minimal adaptations if required to the new home. £10,000 maximum</p> <p>Provide top up funding to a mandatory DFG where the cost of work has exceeded the grant maximum due to unforeseen necessary work and no other source of funding is available. £10,000 maximum</p> <p>Making the dwelling or building suitable for the accommodation, welfare or employment of the disabled person.</p> <p>As a guide, discretionary grant may be used to bring a house to a state of repair where the adaptations or equipment could be properly used. This may include upgrading wiring for a stairlift.</p>	<p>Move and works not supported by an OT or PSR&amp;A Officer</p> <p>Move where alternative adaptations to the existing home could be provided more cost effectively to meet the identified needs</p> <p>Moving costs or expenses that have already been paid prior to submission of the grant application.</p> <p>Stamp Duty</p> <p>Works that have already been started or completed</p> <p>Scooter storage unless it is part of a relocation package, for an essential scooter</p>	<p>Move and works must be agreed and signed off by an OT and PSR&amp;A Officer</p> <p>Works to be carried out within 12 months of approval</p> <p>Written confirmation from receiving local authority that they will address future adaptation requirements via their own Private Sector Renewal Policy</p> <p>Discretionary DFG's will not normally be considered to provide additional bedrooms or living space.</p> <p>A charge will be secured on the property for a period of 10 years to be repaid if the property is sold within this time</p>

**Reading Borough Council's Housing Adaptations Policy**  
**Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011**

**4. EXCLUSIONS**

- Adaptations will not be carried out at a property which has a Right to Buy application
- Adaptations will not be carried out at a property where the tenant is awaiting a transfer

**5. MAKING THE BEST USE OF CURRENT STOCK**

- Adapted council properties, which become available, will be offered in the first instance to those most in need of this type of property before consulting the general needs housing and transfer list.
- It is the Council's policy to discuss at an early stage other options available to meet the tenant's needs. This will include offering a transfer to appropriate alternative accommodation

If available the alternative accommodation would need to meet the following suitability conditions:

- It must allow the tenant to remain in or nearby to the area they currently live if this is where their support needs are fulfilled and cannot be delivered elsewhere.
- The new property must be suitable, or capable of being made so to meet the tenants needs within the grant limit
- It must be likely that this accommodation would become available within 18 months of assessment for major adaptations

Tenants will be assisted with their moving and resettlement costs with a package worth up to a maximum of £2,000.

If a local authority tenant refuses the option of more suitable alternative accommodation, landlord permission for a Disabled Facilities Grant to adapt their current property would only be given in very exceptional circumstances. An exceptional circumstance may be where a move is not considered advisable following independent medical opinion. In such cases a reduced scheme may be agreed.

- Where significant work is completed at a Council property costing £30,000 and over, and the disabled person dies or is unable to remain at the property and permanently resides elsewhere, the remaining family members may be asked to move to alternative accommodation.

## Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011

The transfer would be to a property that meets the tenant's current needs and they will be assisted with their moving and resettlement costs with a package worth up to £2,000.

### 6. CONSTRAINTS

- **Extensions** - the Council will direct resources so that an adaptation is carried out within the existing structure of the dwelling and will only consider approving a DFG for an extension to a property if all other options have been exhausted.
- **Modular adaptations** - the Council, where appropriate, will offer modular adaptations/extensions or the equivalent budget limit. Applicants who choose a more expensive build of extension will have to fund the difference.
- **Bulk Purchase** - where the Council or its partners has negotiated a "bulk" contract e.g. stairlifts, applicants will be offered the use of the discount provided by the bulk purchase contractor(s). If they choose to use another, more expensive contractor they will have to fund the difference.
- **Recycling** - where available the Council will offer recycled adaptations or equivalent budget limit where the adaptation offered meets the needs of the occupier at the best price available.
- **Schedule of rates** - the Council will use a schedule of rates for bathroom adaptations. If applicants choose to use another, more expensive contractor they will have to fund the difference.
- **Extensive Ramping** - due to the high cost of providing, and then sometimes removing, extensive ramping, permission for this will only be given where extensive adaptations are already in place (or are to take place) to provide a lifetime home and therefore moving to alternative accommodation would not be economically viable. Ramping will be modular wherever possible and therefore reusable.
- **On going maintenance** - where available extended warranties will be funded by the DFG.

All adaptations are the responsibility of the applicant and if appropriate, council tenants may be able to elect for the council to take on the maintenance.

**Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy**  
**Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011**

**7. DELIVERING THE SERVICE**

Reading Borough Council in partnership with West Berkshire District Council and Wokingham Borough Council has contracted Ridgeway Care and Repair to provide a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service in the borough.

Ridgeway Care and Repair will assist applicants in applying for grants and loans as well as assisting homeowners ineligible for financial assistance to carry out adaptations to their homes

An application for assistance shall be in a form prescribed by the Council and shall include:

- Full particulars including, where relevant, plans of the work, building regulations and planning approval for which grant assistance is sought (“the eligible works”)
- Two estimates from different contractors of the cost of carrying out of the assisted works under £10,000 and three for works over this amount apart from where a schedule of rates is being used or a bulk purchase contract.
- Particular of any professional fees and other charges which relate to the preparation for and carrying out of the assisted works
- Proof that the applicant is the owner or a tenant of the dwelling
- Consent of all owners of the dwelling to the assisted works being carried out.
- An undertaking from the applicant to conform to all the applicable conditions of grant approval.

**Charges**

The grant approval sum will include the estimated eligible cost, the VAT where applicable and certain other charges known as preliminary or ancillary service charges. These include:

- Fees charged by the Home Improvement Agency
- Other charges that may be included in the grant approval sum are for such costs as architects and/or surveyors fees, building regulations and/or planning application fees, the cost of specialist inspections such as electrical test inspections, completion of Certificate of Title form by the applicants bank, building society or solicitor

## Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011

### Referral Scrutiny

Disabled Facilities Grant referrals will be scrutinised prior to formal application by the Disabled Facilities Advisory Group (DFAG), which comprises of the Occupational Therapy Team Manager, the Private Sector Renewal Team & Adaptations Team Manager and the Allocations Team Manager.

### Staging Applications

If the situation should arise whereby the demand for Disabled Facilities Grants outstrips the resources available then all applications will be prioritised according to agreed criteria following grant approval.

The criteria used is detailed below and is based on the principles of the Fairer Access to Care Services (FACS)

- The service user is at serious demonstrable risk and without intervention, accident or injury is predictable and/or there is a sustained threat to their living condition.
- The carer is at serious demonstrable risk and without intervention, accident or injury is predictable and/or there is a sustained threat to their living condition
- To prevent admission and facilitate discharge from hospital where the person is unable to return home before the adaptations to meet the Service User's basic care needs are made (i.e. spinal injury)
- Where there will be a predictable quick decline in the physical condition of the Service User (such as in terminal illness, Duchennes MD, MND, Huntingdon's Disease) where early provision of an adaptation is essential to support the individual and their carer as the basic care needs change.
- An adaptation is required to sustain a care package/family situation that is at risk of falling down imminently without intervention and where alternative temporary solutions are not practicable.
- An adaptation is required to support and/or enable the developmental progress of a child; to prevent the deterioration of the child's condition; or maximise to achieve independence in the future.
- The Service User requires access to essential facilities such as bedroom, toilet to meet their basic care needs and/or enable carers to continue to provide support

## **Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011**

- The Service User needs access to/from the property to attend a day service, school or hospital, including day hospital, on a regular basis, or lives alone and needs access to shops to attend to their own provisions.
- Where the Service User needs access to specific personal care facilities to support long term management of a severe medical problem e.g. double incontinence, stoma care, home dialysis, or where the ambient temperature would have a direct impact on a medical condition for functioning. The above do not present an immediate risk or threat to their living situation
- The Service User requires access to essential facilities for personal care but does not have specific medical needs.
- The Service User needs access to/from the property on an occasional or irregular basis.
- The Service User's condition would predictably deteriorate over time without provision of an adaptation but where there is no risk in the foreseeable future
- All other adaptations eligible for grant funding including the welfare and employment needs of the Service User, which is not essential to meet their care needs.

In all cases where the Disabled Facilities Grant has been approved the adaptations work will be carried out within the 12 month statutory period, however the staging of applications will enable finite resources to be used in the first instance to assist those service users with the highest needs on the grounds of health, safety and welfare

### **Rescindment of Grant**

The Head of Environment & Consumer Services has the authority to rescind any housing grant administered by the team and/or to recover monies already paid towards the grant, given the following circumstances:

- Where subsequent to approval it is found that the grant application was made fraudulently
- Where the work stipulated has not been completed within a year of the date of formal approval
- Due to force majeure
- Where all parties involved agree to the termination of the grant

## **Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011**

A grant applicant has the right of appeal against the Council's intention to rescind a grant and this will be dealt with through the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure.

### **Scope of the Policy**

The policy applies to:

- Staff working in the Private Sector Renewal & Adaptations Team, Housing, Community Care and Children's Services
- Ridgeway Care & Repair staff involved with assisting applicants in Reading
- Any other organisation or individual acting as an agent on behalf of grant applicants in Reading
- Anyone making an application for assistance

### **Future Policy Review and Changes**

This version of the policy will be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011. There will be an ongoing process of review and unforeseen budget restrictions may necessitate the re-prioritisation of financial assistance through staging of applications.

Minor changes to policy delivery, which do not: -

- Affect those who are eligible for assistance
- Amend the scope and levels of assistance available
- Introduce new forms of assistance
- Affect achieving greater value for money

can be made by the Head of Environment & Consumer Services in consultation with the Heads of Housing, Community Care and Children's Services.

It is a requirement that any significant changes made to the published policy are reported to the Council, and requirements in relation to publication and dissemination will be fulfilled.

Significant changes will include those for eligibility and scope as well as any new forms of assistance, which might be introduced, or changes to or removal of current assistance.

## Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011

### Local Performance Indicators

The local performance indicators that relate to this policy are:

1. Average number of weeks waiting for major adaptations from assessment to work beginning - the target is 24 weeks (measured by referral to housing agency to approval of DFG)
2. 100 Major Adaptations will be carried out cross tenure.
3. Grants will be approved within six months on receipt of a valid application

### **8. GRANT APPLICATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

The procedures for administering financial assistance are outlined in the Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Procedure for administering Disabled Facilities Grants
- Appendix 2: Terms and Conditions applicable to financial assistance
- Appendix 3: Acronyms
- Appendix 4: Contacts
- Appendix 5: Equalities Impact Assessment

The test of resources (means test) used by the council is as set out by Communities and Local Government, and further information can be found on their website at [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

### **Record Management**

Record management will be in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy. Staff working in Private Sector Renewal & Adaptations Team, Community Care and Children's Services will keep records.

Ridgeway Care and Repair and other agents acting on behalf of applicants will also maintain records

### **Budgets**

Reading Borough Council has allocated a budget in 2010/11 of £830k for Council properties and £662k for private sector properties. This funding will be used to implement the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant assistance described in this policy and different budget amounts may apply in later years.

## Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011

The Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants described in this policy will be funded through the budget allocated to the Private Sector Renewal policy for private sector residents and through housing budgets in the case of Council tenants.

### 9. APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

The Council has an established corporate complaints procedure for dealing with appeals and complaints. All Council offices have copies of the leaflet explaining how to make a complaint.

A complaint should be linked to the Council's systems and procedures and may be about delay, lack of response, discourtesy or any item that leaves cause for dissatisfaction with the Council's conduct.

Where service users remain unhappy with the outcome of the formal complaint, they may wish to contact the Local Government Ombudsman. Contact details are given in Appendix 4.

If the applicant's concerns are related to the service provided by the Home Improvement Agency, the applicant should contact Ridgeway Care and Repair and follow their complaints procedure.

If the complaint is about any other organisation acting as an agent on behalf of the applicant, then the applicant should go through the organisation's respective complaints procedure.

### 10. CONSULTATION

Comments were invited from residents, organisations and internal departments to the policy through the use of posters, flyers, press release and a consultation event.

*A copy of the policy was also made available for consultation on the Council's website.*

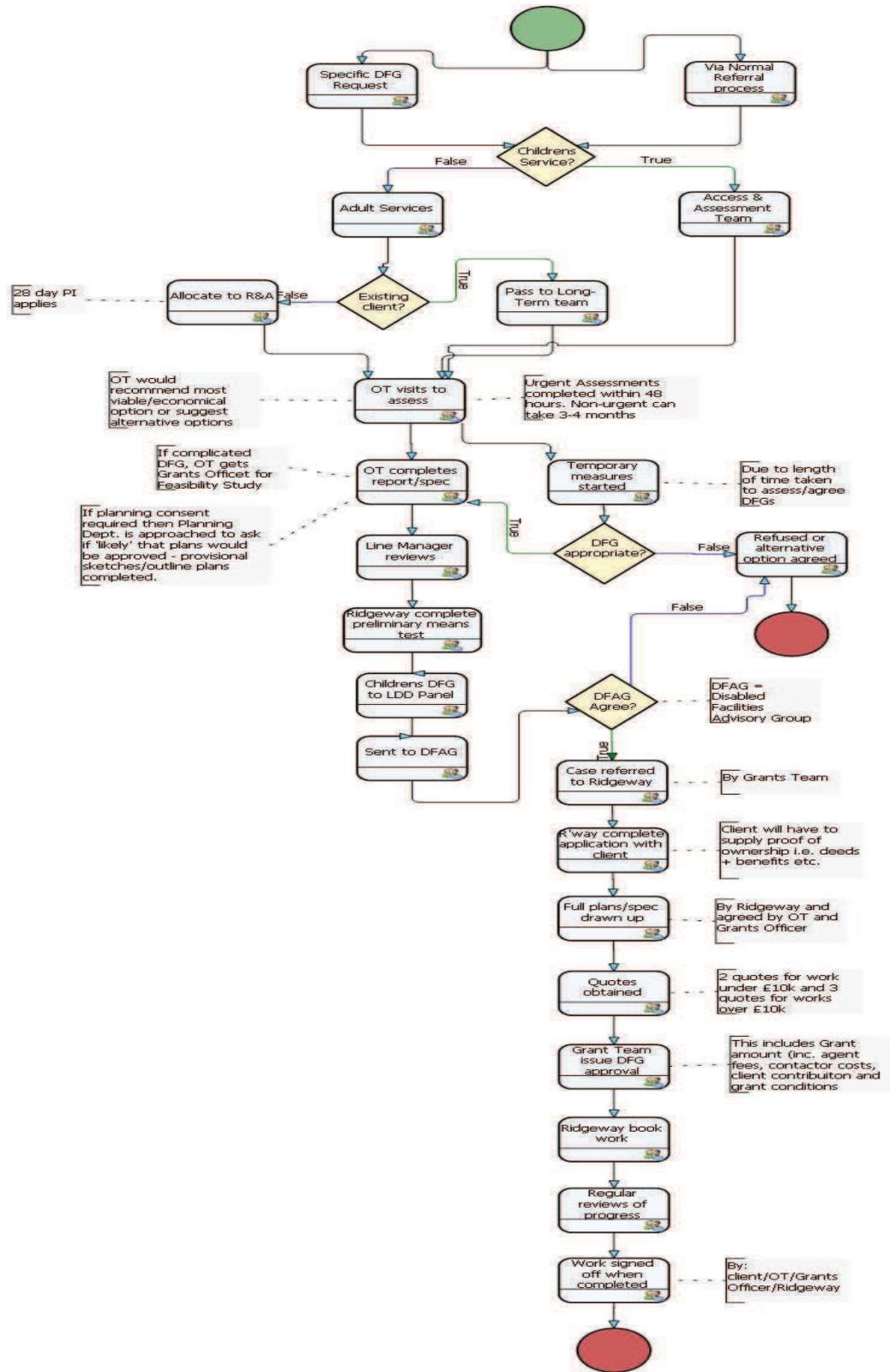
*All comments were considered, and where appropriate, incorporated into this document.*

Once the council have formerly adopted this policy the public will be informed as follows:

- Publishing the policy on the council's website at [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)
- A full copy of the policy will be available for inspection, free of charge, at the council's offices. A summary document will also be made available for members of the public on request.

# Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011

## APPENDIX 1 - PROCEDURE FOR ADMINISTERING DFG'S



Note: this is the outline of the procedure and maybe subject to change

**Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy**  
**Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011**

**APPENDIX 2 - TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

**Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996**  
**Summary of Grant Conditions**

**Disabled Facilities Grant**

1. In approving an application for a grant the Council is liable to pay the grant only in so far as payment for the cost of the eligible works described in any specifications or agreed schedule of work and any agreed drawings or scheme and where these works have been carried out in a reasonable and workmanlike manner.
2. It is a condition of the grant that the eligible works are carried out within twelve months from the date of approval of the application. This period may, however, be extended by the Council if they think fit, particularly when they are satisfied that the eligible works cannot be, or could not have been, carried out without carrying out other works which could not have been reasonably foreseen when the application was made.
3. In every case, it is the applicant who employs the builder to undertake agreed works and the Council have no contractual liabilities in that relationship as their role is only to administer the grant/loan process.
4. The applicant is responsible for ensuring the quality of the completed works
5. If an applicant submits an estimate/quote from a member of their family who then carries out the agreed works the grant/loan will only be paid on the basis of the cost of materials and not labour.
6. In all cases, an application for assistance towards works that have already been completed will not be processed. Any part of works not commenced, which would otherwise have been considered for assistance will be processed for possible grant/loan assistance as long as work is not commenced prior to formal approval.
7. All payments shall be conditional upon receipt of an acceptable invoice and made direct to the appropriate contractor following agreement with the applicant that works to the appropriate stage have been satisfactorily completed. In a situation of dispute between the applicant and contractor, which is not resolved in a reasonable time period the grant, or part thereof, may be paid to the applicant at the discretion of the Council. Where works are incomplete as a result of a dispute the Council will withhold a proportion of the grant awarded equivalent to the value of work outstanding.

**Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy**  
**Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011**

8. The Council will include the cost of preliminary or ancillary services fees and charges within the calculation of assistance, each submission of fees will be individually considered for reasonableness. The payment of any such fees is conditional on a grant being approved and the completion of all specified works, otherwise the Council will not be held responsible for any fees incurred before or after approval.
9. The Council will consider requests for interim payments such that no interim payment will be for more than 90% of the cost of completed work and in aggregate no more than 90% of the total approved amount before final completion.
10. The grant works must be carried out by one of the contractors whose estimates/quotes were submitted as part of the application process, the grant having been calculated using the lowest priced estimate/quote.
11. Where an applicant's circumstances change or are confirmed as different from originally stated, after approval is issued, such that approval would no longer be given, then the grant approval will be cancelled and no payments made, or no further payments made where interim payments have already been paid, except in exceptional circumstances when the Head of Environment & Consumer Services may give authority to provide further funding so as to conclude work at a suitable and appropriate stage. Where payments have been made, the local authority may demand repayment together with compound interest from the date on which payment was made until repayment, at such reasonable rate as the Council may determine.
12. The Council or their agents will hold final authority to determine what works are included on grant schedules.
13. DFG's for owner occupied dwellings will be subject to a charge. A limited charge of up to £10,000 on grants over £5,100 is repayable if the property is disposed of within 5 years of the certified date and subject to the Council being satisfied that it is reasonable in all circumstances to require the repayment, having considered:
  - The extent to which the recipient of the grant would suffer financial hardship were he required to repay all or any of the grant
  - Whether disposal of the premises is to enable the recipient of the grant to take up employment, or to change the location of his employment
  - Whether disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or well being of the recipient of the grant or of a disabled occupant of the premises; and

**Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy**  
**Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011**

- Whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to live with, or near, any person who is disabled or infirm or in need of care, which the recipient of the grant is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the recipient of the grant is in need of by reason of disability or infirmity.

14. It is a condition of the grant that the adapted property (or in the case of a relocation grant, the property into which the person for whom the grant has been provided has been relocated) remains the primary residence of the person for whom the grant has been provided for the duration of the grant conditions, unless that person's medical condition deteriorates to such an extent that alternative accommodation with care becomes essential. Breach of this condition will result in the full repayment of the grant.

In addition to which the following conditions apply:

15. In certain circumstances where the Council believes that actions of applicants may have been taken to deliberately defraud the Council a file will be passed to the Police for investigation.

16. The payment of any grant approved will only be considered after any applicant's contribution has been accounted for in the value of invoices submitted

17. The responsibility to gain all necessary approvals for works to be undertaken with assistance rests with the applicant or their agent, such approvals may be Planning Permission or Building Regulation Approval or any of the matters raised within the terms and conditions of grant assistance.

18. Tenants in receipt of major adaptations to their Council homes (over £5,000) will have their transfer applications placed on the lowest priority band for housing for a period of 5 years unless significant reasons for a transfer can be shown as necessary.

19. The Council will also seek repayment of a DFG where it has investigated and has reasonable cause to believe that the applicant has abused the DFG system.

**Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy**  
**Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011**

**APPENDIX 3 - ACRONYMS**

CLG	Communities and Local Government
DFG	Disabled Facilities Grant
HIA	Home Improvement Agency
OT	Occupational Therapist
PSR&A	Private Sector Renewal & Adaptations Officer
RRO	Regulatory Reform Order 2002
RSL	Registered Social Landlord

**GLOSSARY**

Necessary & Appropriate

The proposed works are considered on the basis that they are necessary and appropriate to meet the individual's needs and this is therefore based on a recommendation following assessment by an Occupational Therapist using guidance from the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.

Reasonable & Practicable

The works are also considered on the grounds of being reasonable and practicable taking into account the type, age and condition of the property.

Houseproud

Government project set up set up to help homeowners to release the equity in their property.

Eligible Works

Works that can be considered for grant assistance

Estimated Cost

The lowest price quoted for the eligible works by a competent tendering contractor

Preliminary or Ancillary Services and Charges

In relation to an application for a grant, this means the cost of services and charges that relate to the application and preparation for and the carrying out of work, this may include:

- Fees charged by architects in the preparation of scaled drawings
- Fees charged by surveyors for the supervision of works
- Building regulation fees
- Planning application fees
- Fees charged by Home Improvement Agencies for undertaking non statutory functions in respect of the grant application

Eligible Expense

The amount of expenses, which in the opinion of Reading Borough Council are to be incurred in the execution of the eligible works and with respect to the preliminary and ancillary services and charges.

**Reading Borough Council Housing Adaptations Policy**  
**Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011**

**Appendix 4 - Contacts**

<b>Reading Borough Council</b> Civic Offices, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 2LU	Tel: 0118 9373737
<b>Private Sector Housing Team Email:</b> <a href="mailto:psra.team@reading.gov.uk">psra.team@reading.gov.uk</a>	Tel: 0118 9372562
<b>Community Care - Response &amp; Assessment Team</b> Email: <a href="mailto:communitycare@reading.gov.uk">communitycare@reading.gov.uk</a>	Tel: 0118 9373747
Children's Services	Tel: 0118 9553641
<b>Ridgeway Care &amp; Repair Berkshire West</b> 2 Rivermead, Pipers Way, Thatcham, RG19 4EP Email: <a href="mailto:bwcr@ridgewaycommunity.org.uk">bwcr@ridgewaycommunity.org.uk</a>	Tel: 01635 588811
<b>Enquiries about planning permission, building regulations, listed building consent and conservation areas</b> Planning Applications: Email: <a href="mailto:planningcomments@reading.gov.uk">planningcomments@reading.gov.uk</a>	Tel: 0800 626540
Building Control: Email: <a href="mailto:buildingcontrol@reading.gov.uk">buildingcontrol@reading.gov.uk</a>	Tel: 0118 9390449
Complaints Email: <a href="mailto:complaints@reading.gov.uk">complaints@reading.gov.uk</a>	Tel: 0800 626540
Local Government Ombudsman Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries.london@lgo.org.uk">enquiries.london@lgo.org.uk</a>	Tel: 020 72174620