

Lincolnshire Discretionary Housing Financial Assistance Policy - Explanatory Notes

These notes sit alongside the Lincolnshire Discretionary Housing Financial Assistance Policy and provide additional information where considered appropriate, to support all parties to fairly and consistently apply the policy so that it may effectively meet its objectives.

These notes are by no means comprehensive as the intention of the policy is to allow each case to be considered on its own merits depending on the specific circumstances so that assistance may be provided when reasonable and appropriate.

Range of purposes

Further information is contained within the table below on the range of purposes Discretionary Housing Financial Assistance (DHFA) may, subject to eligibility, be used for. However any justifiable, appropriate and reasonable case will be considered.

Applications must be supported in writing by an appropriate professional (see who can support an application / make a referral) setting out the type and details of housing assistance they believe the person requires and the reasons they consider the assistance is required

| Purpose | Eligible costs | Who can refer? |
|--|---|---|
| Relocation Grant – It may be considered appropriate to assist an eligible DFG applicant to move to a suitable home where: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• their current home is not suitable for adaptation, or• their landlord refuses to allow the property to be adapted, or• an owner occupier is in financial difficulty and needs to move to a suitable affordable home. | Reasonable legal, estate agents fees and removal costs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Housing Authority• Occupational Therapist or Community Care Officer |
| Topping up a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant | Eligible costs above the mandatory DFG maximum. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Housing Authority |
| Helping reduce delayed transfers of care (DTC) | The cost of reasonable necessary and appropriate works to the patient's home in order to facilitate their safe discharge from hospital. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupational Therapist or Community Care Officer• GP or medical professional |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital Housing Link Worker |
| Helping people stay safe, warm and well | The cost of remedial works to address a Housing Health and Safety Rating System Hazard or other potential risk e.g. hoarding clearance, following assessment by a qualified Local Authority Officer or other appropriate information and evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authority Officer • Occupational Therapist or Community Care Officer • GP or medical professional • Professional from another appropriate organisation. |
| Providing aids and adaptations to support those with conditions such as dementia, learning difficulties, neurodiversity and sensory impairments to live safely in their homes | The cost of appropriate aids and adaptations in line with national guidance. This may include assistive technology where absolutely necessary and appropriate and no other funding source should be providing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational Therapist or Community Care Officer • GP or medical professional • Hospital Housing Link Worker • Local Authority Officer • Professional from another appropriate organisation |
| Assisting with an applicant's contribution to a mandatory grant | Reasonable assistance to meet calculated contribution amount in some circumstances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Housing Authority |

Professions and organisations who can support an application for DHFA

- Occupational Therapist or Community Care Officer
- GP or other medical professional e.g. Practice Nurse
- Local Authority Officer e.g. Housing or Environmental Health Officer, Wellbeing Lincs
- Professional from another appropriate organisations including but not limited to: Lincolnshire Police, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, voluntary sector or third sector organisation e.g. Citizens Advice, Age UK.....

Applications must be supported in writing setting out the type and details of housing assistance they believe the person requires and the reasons they consider the financial assistance is required. Contact details of the supporting / referring professional must be provided.

Panel approach

Approval of Discretionary Housing Financial Assistance over £15,000 will be made through a panel approach or in accordance with the Councils Scheme of Delegation, details of the approach for each council are:

| Authority | Decision and delegation |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Boston Borough Council | Approval may be given by the relevant Assistant Director, Deputy Chief Executive or Chief Executive who must secure consent from the relevant portfolio holder with a full audit trail of the circumstances and decision process. |
| City of Lincoln Council | Panel to be made up of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Private Sector housing Team Leader• Case officer• Referring body |
| East Lindsey District Council | Approval may be given by the relevant Assistant Director, Deputy Chief Executive or Chief Executive who must secure consent from the relevant portfolio holder with a full audit trail of the circumstances and decision process. |
| North Kesteven District Council | Decisions on applications will be made in accordance with the Council's Constitution and Scheme of Delegation |
| South Holland District Council | Approval may be given by the relevant Assistant Director, Deputy Chief Executive or Chief Executive who must secure consent from the relevant portfolio holder with a full audit trail of the circumstances and decision process. |
| South Kesteven District Council | Decisions on applications will be made in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to £15,000 - Team Leader• Up to £30,000 - Head of Service• Above £30,000 - Assistant Director |
| West Lindsey District Council | Panel to be made up of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homes, Health and Wellbeing Team Manager• Senior Homes, health and Wellbeing Officer• Senior Homelessness Prevention officer• Referring body |

On Discretionary housing financial assistance can be applied for once in each financial year unless exceptional circumstances can be evidenced to the satisfaction of the councils agreed panel approach.

These circumstances may include significant deterioration of the applicants/clients condition or a substantial and unforeseen deterioration in the properties condition e.g. due to a leak.

Local variations to the Financial Assessment set out within the policy (if any)

| Authority | Detail of local variation |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Boston Borough Council | None |
| City of Lincoln Council | All applicants for a discretionary grant up to the value of £15,000 will not be required to undertake a financial assessment of means. However, when 75% of the Council's Better Care Fund available budget has been committed discretionary grants will not be available until the next years funding has been received. In these instances, the Council does not undertake to maintain a waiting list. |
| East Lindsey District Council | None |
| North Kesteven District Council | No applicant is expected to pay the first £1,800.00 of an assessed contribution |
| South Holland District Council | None |
| South Kesteven District Council | A discretionary grant for a stair lift and/or modular access ramp is available to any disabled resident who meets the criteria for a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant. The maximum funding available is £7,000 per item. This grant is not subject to a financial assessment or re-payment condition, but the application must be supported by a recommendation for the adaptation from a Lincolnshire County Council Occupational Therapist. |
| West Lindsey District Council | None |

Waiver of financial assessment

In exceptional circuses (such as end of care), the following supporting evidence should be provided to support the waiver of the financial assessment in order to expedite works up to the value of £8,000:

- Letter from the GP, Consultant or other appropriate medical professional involved in the person's care.

Works considered likely to increase the value of a property

Where works are considered likely to increase the value of a property, a Local Land Charge will be registered to recover the funding when the property is sold or otherwise transferred. The following works are considered likely to increase the value of a property:

- Renewal or significant repair or replacement of extensive element/s of a property e.g. roof, electrics, heating system
- Works that would increase the habitable floor space of a property or significantly improve the facilities available e.g. DFG extension, conversion of a part of an existing property.
- Where Discretionary Housing Financial Assistance is linked to the top up of a mandatory Disabled Facility Grant, the **full value** of the DHFA will be registered and recoverable as a Local Land Charge.

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| Title | Lincolnshire Discretionary Housing Financial Assistance Policy – Explanatory Notes |
| Version | Draft v.1.4 |
| Owner | |
| Attachments | Lincolnshire Discretionary Housing Financial Assistance Policy |
| Approved by | |
| Review date | |