



Introduction

This Factsheet is about complaints relating to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). It should be read together with our [‘How to Complain’](#) webpage, available on the ‘Making A Complaint’ tab.

The DFG is a mandatory council grant that helps to meet the costs of adapting a disabled person’s home so that they can continue to live there as independently as possible. Tenants, owner occupiers and landlords who have a disabled tenant can apply for a DFG. The DFG is a means tested grant to disabled adults (means testing does not apply to parents of dependent disabled children or young people under 19). This means depending on your income, savings and outgoings, you might have to make a contribution towards the cost of the works. In Wales, the maximum DFG award is currently £36,000.

Examples of the sorts of adaptations the DFG covers include:

- Widening doors and installing ramps or stairlifts
- Kitchen and bathroom adaptations for eg. walk in showers
- Extensions (possibly for a downstairs bathroom and/or bedroom)
- Installing a suitable heating system that meets the disabled person’s needs
- Adapting the controls on the heating system or lighting so they are easier to use.

Before a formal DFG application is considered, a social services department’s occupational therapist (OT) will usually need to assess the disabled person’s needs, including whether the works are “necessary and appropriate”. The OT’s recommendations are normally put to the Housing Department who administers the DFG. The council will then have to decide whether it is “reasonable and practicable” to do the works.

Depending on the OT’s recommendations, there are a number of other checks that a council may carry out at the initial enquiries stage. Your local council should be able to tell you more, including whether you have to complete a pre-application DFG enquiries form. Once this stage is satisfactorily completed, you normally have to submit a formal DFG application along with other documents. Provided the council has received all the relevant information, legally it has to approve a completed DFG application within six months of its receipt.

What the Ombudsman can do

The Ombudsman can look at:

- Whether there have been unreasonable delays by the Council during the pre and post DFG application stages, including arranging an OT assessment
- Where a DFG application is refused, whether the council has considered all the information the applicant submitted and carried out any internal appeals process correctly;
- Whether the council has carried out its inspection/monitoring functions adequately (the council is not usually responsible for the day to day supervision of a contractor/builder's work).

What the Ombudsman cannot do

The Ombudsman cannot:

- Deal with legal disputes between you and the contractor carrying out the work
- Make the council provide a higher award of DFG if the decision has been properly made.

Issues to bear in mind

- If you are a Housing Association tenant or a tenant of an Association created following a stock transfer, you should check whether your landlord operates its own scheme for adapting its properties
- When deciding whether the work is reasonable and practicable, the age and condition of the property are some of the factors considered. For example, the property's layout may mean it is not possible to fit a stair lift or the property may be in a dilapidated state and need substantial repairs. In such cases, the council may decide it is more cost effective for a person to move to more suitable alternative accommodation
- Sometimes, additional work is required which takes the cost above the maximum DFG award. The council has the discretion to provide top-up assistance, sometimes in the form of a loan. Whilst a council does not have to provide discretionary assistance, it should consider an application for such assistance
- Although it does not have to do so, a council has the discretion to provide a discretionary DFG for adaptations falling outside the mandatory DFG.

Further information

You can find further information regarding DFGs in the following locations:

[www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants;](http://www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants)

National Assembly for Wales “**Housing for Disabled Children and Families**”

www.assemblywales.org/qg12-0013.pdf

Examples of cases that the Ombudsman has looked at can be found on our website, under the ‘Publications’ tab on the [‘Our Findings’](#) & [‘The Ombudsman’s Casebook’](#) pages.

Contact us

If you are unsure whether the Ombudsman would be able to look into your complaint, please [contact us](#) on 0300 790 0203 or ask@ombudsman.wales

Also available in Welsh.

Easy Read

Disabled Facilities Grant

 [Download](#)

This document is available in Welsh and English. You can write to us in Welsh and we will reply in Welsh. This will not lead to a delay in responding.

ask@ombudsman.wales

0300 790 0203 Our phone line is open from 10am-4pm Monday – Friday