



# **EALING COUNCIL'S REPAIRS AND ADAPTATIONS SERVICE (RAS) inc THE HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY (HIA) and HANDYPERSON SCHEME (HP)**

Assistance for Adapting, and Repairing your Home Policy  
(To be read with application form if applicable)

Funded by the MHCLG Better Care Fund,  
Ealing Council Capital and Discretionary Programmes

HOUSING GRANTS, CONSTRUCTION AND REGENERATION ACT 1996 (HGCR)  
THE REGULATORY REFORM (HOUSING ASSISTANCE) (ENGLAND AND WALES)  
ORDER 2002 (RRO)

**Version 40 (A4)**

**Effective date reviewed and published: October 2021**

A single adaptations policy based on the needs of the locality, reviewed annually, and signed off by

# CONTENTS

<b>Title Page</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>Contents Page</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>1. Ealing Council Vision and Priorities</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>2. Introduction - Welcome</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>3. Customer Charter – Policy Aims</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>4. Legal Framework</b>	<b>Page 4-6</b>
<b>5. Disabled Facilities Grants (Referrals)</b>	<b>Page 6-7</b>
<b>6. Disabled Facilities Grants (Means testing)</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>7. Disabled Facilities Grants (Exclusions)</b>	<b>Page 7-8</b>
<b>8. Disabled Facilities Grants (Ownership)</b>	<b>Page 8-9</b>
<b>9. Disabled Facilities Grants (Legal Charge)</b>	<b>Page 9-10</b>
<b>10. Disabled Facilities Grants (Tendering)</b>	<b>Page 10-11</b>
<b>11. Disabled Facilities Grants (Grant Conditions)</b>	<b>Page 11-12</b>
<b>12. Other Grants – Discretionary Funding</b>	<b>Page 13</b>
<b>13. Handyperson Grants (General Advice)</b>	<b>Page 13</b>
<b>14. Handyperson Grants (Basic)</b>	<b>Page 14</b>
<b>15. Handyperson Grants (Type 1)</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>16. Handyperson Grants (Type 2)</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>17. Handyperson Grants (Grant Conditions)</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>18. General (Fees and Ancillary Charges)</b>	<b>Page 16</b>
<b>19. General (Restrictions)</b>	<b>Page 17</b>
<b>20. General (Timescales and Service Standards)</b>	<b>Page 17-18</b>
<b>21. General (Means Tested Benefits)</b>	<b>Page 19</b>
<b>22. Abbreviations</b>	<b>Page 19</b>
<b>23. How to contact us</b>	<b>Page 20</b>
<b>24. Privacy Statement</b>	<b>Page 20</b>

## 1. EALING COUNCIL'S VISION AND PRIORITIES

The Council's new administration has three key priorities for all in Ealing (July 2021)

- Creating good jobs
- Tackling the climate crisis
- Fighting inequality

These three priorities are supported by nine aims that are outcome focused and are directly overseen by members of the Council's cabinet to ensure these are delivered. The nine outcomes through which we aim to make the borough better are set out below:-

- Tackling inequality
- Climate action
- Health lives
- A fairer start
- Decent living incomes
- Inclusive economy
- Genuinely affordable homes
- Good growth
- Thriving communities

All of our work under this plan is underpinned by our strong commitment to work with local partners to achieve the best outcomes for our local residents including health, education, policing, employment, housing, local business and the voluntary and community sector

As a council our key purpose is improving lives for residents. We cannot achieve the change we aspire to alone and need to build partnerships and co-produce solutions with communities. To do this effectively we must demonstrate every day to staff, partners, businesses and residents that we are:

- Trustworthy
- Innovative
- Collaborative
- Accountable

## 2. INTRODUCTION - Welcome to our service

Under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (the Act), Ealing Council, has a statutory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to applicants who qualify. Monies for DFG's are funded through the Better Care Fund and Ealing Council's Capital Programme.

At Ealing, these DFG's / Major adaptations are arranged by our Repairs and Adaptations Service (RAS) incorporating The Home Improvement Agency (HIA)

This policy sets out the mandatory legal framework for DFGs, and how the Council intends to use its powers under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) to provide discretionary interventions to promote independent living and well-being.

For the Council to use its discretionary powers under the RRO it must have a policy. This policy sets out the new flexibilities the Council is adopting in respect of DFGs, including, but not restricted to, changes to the maximum award and the ceiling for means testing.

Please note the following sections in this policy: -

- *Relate to private tenure. Different arrangements apply if the adaptations are to be carried out to a property owned by Ealing Council.*
- *Relate to Disabled Facilities Grants, and discretionary funding grants associated to local, government guidance, national guidance, and Legislation.*

### 3. CUSTOMER CHARTER / POLICY AIMS

We are committed to providing a quality service to help older, disabled or otherwise vulnerable people to continue living at home in a suitable, safe environment which promotes and supports independent living.

WE WILL:

- Treat you fairly, with respect, and in accordance with the council's Equality and Diversity Policy. We promise to protect your rights under the Data Protection, and Human Rights Legislation.
- Carry out our work in a professional manner and treat the personal information given to us as confidential. With your consent such information may, if necessary be passed to partner organisations. We will always adhere to GDPR legislation.
- Provide advice, information, and support to all applicants in the borough in relation to DFG's and Discretionary grants. Offering additional support to assist with completions of paperwork if required.
- Help you through the grant process and arrange for work to be carried out by a registered, nominated approved contractor who carries out good quality work and demonstrates a high degree of customer care.
- Utilise the Better Care Funding in its entirety to provide a seamless transparent service to our residents. Providing where possible a value for money alternative and high standard delivery approach.
- Use our service to help Social Care Services, National Health Service (NHS) and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) reduce hospital admissions, facilitate hospital discharges, reduce domiciliary and residential care.
- Strive to continually improve our service and that of the customer's journey

### 4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The applicant (who may not necessarily be the disabled person) must either own the property or have a long-term tenancy. Proof of ownership will be sought.

The tenant must have a tenancy agreement with a minimum of 5 years remaining and intend to live in the property during the grant period which is currently 5 years.

You can apply for a DFG's on the behalf of the disabled person if you are an owner or the tenant, if you're a family member, friend, carer, or landlord supporting a disabled person.

A statutory limit applies to DFG's which may be subject to a means test (depending on grant works) to determine if the disabled person must contribute towards the cost of the

works. (The exception to this rule is when the adaptations are for a child, subject to being approved by a management panel).

The primary aim of DFGs is to provide aids and adaptations to enable people with disabilities to live independently and safely in their own homes

The Act sets out an example of what types of work, can be undertaken under a DFG Application for assistance and that is dependent on:

- the works being necessary and appropriate
- the works being reasonable and practicable

Under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (the Act), Ealing Council, has a statutory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to applicants who qualify. Monies for DFG's are funded through the Better Care Fund and Ealing Councils Capital Programmes.

The primary aim of DFGs is to provide aids and adaptations to enable residents who are elderly, vulnerable and disabled to live independently and safely in their own homes.

Our department receives a recommendation following an assessment of the client in their own home environment by an Occupational Therapist (OT) and is deemed as necessary and appropriate, and reasonable and practicable to meet the clients needs

Necessary and appropriate works are determined following an assessment of the client and their home environment by an Occupational Therapist (OT). This concentrates on the client's ability to remain living independently in their own home and must distinguish between works which are desirable and those which are necessary and appropriate.

Reasonable and practicable: there are times when it is not reasonable or practicable to provide a grant. This could occur when there are excessive changes, where there are space constraints or where moving existing services is prohibitively expensive etc.

The maximum grant that can be awarded in England is £30,000. The grant approval will be for the total cost of works that have been deemed necessary and appropriate and reasonable and practicable, by the referring OT, and RAS-HIA Management Panel (please note this grant limit is often under the means testing threshold , not the £30, 000 maximum grant limit)

If the total cost of providing the necessary adaptations exceeds the available grant of £30,000 you will need to consider how to raise the additional monies needed. NB: this may include unforeseen works (e.g. by means of a loan, mortgage etc). No TOP UP's will be granted due to restrictions on discretionary funding.

Applications for a DFG are eligible for grant approval providing they are necessary and appropriate, reasonable, and practical, having regard to the age and condition of the property: -

- Making the building or dwelling safe
- Facilitating access to and from the building
- Facilitating access to or providing a bedroom
- Facilitating access to the principal family room

- Provision of a room containing a bath or shower or facilitating the use of such a facility
- Provision of a room containing a WC or facilitating the use of such a facility
- Provision of a room containing a wash hand basin or facilitating the use of such a facility
- Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food (only if used by the disabled person)
- Providing or improving a heating system
- Facilitating the use of power, light or heat by altering the same or by providing additional means of control
- Facilitating access and movement around the dwelling to enable the disabled person to provide care for another person

Associated Legislation, information guidelines and sources relating to DFG's and Discretionary Grants include: -

- Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002
- Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 (as amended)
- Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008
- Party Wall etc Act 1996
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Care Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Better Care Fund
- Housing Adaptations for Disabled People: A detailed guide relating to legislation guidance and good practice, published by the Home Adaptations Consortium in 2013 and updated in 2015)

## 5. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS (Referrals)

Applicants for DFG's should be referred by the Council's Occupational Therapy Service (Social Services Occupational Therapist Team) or Ealing's NHS Partners.

Adaptation works recommended for a disabled person by the OT, will be eligible for a grant provided they are necessary, appropriate, reasonable, and practical, having regard to the age and condition of the property.

On receipt of a referral from an OT, RAS-HIA will deal with each case on a priority basis, regardless of their tenure. Each case will be classified, into one of the following categories:

- Urgent / Emergency Priority
- Standard Priority
- Specialist Equipment Only

Urgent and emergency priority cases will be dealt with first by RAS-HIA. In periods of high demand, the complexity of the case, need and situation of the client, and date of referral will also be taken into consideration when distinguishing between referrals.

If an adaptation is expected to cost below £1,000 then it will be considered to be a Minor Adaptation and Social Services (SS) will arrange for the works to be completed and a referral will not be made to RAS-HIA.

Please note: In unprecedented times, funding challenges and Social Services delays, RAS-HIA will place referrals onto a waitlist and a holding letter will be sent to the proposed applicant.

## **6. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT (Means testing)**

Under the RRO, The Council has used their flexibility to remove the financial assessment for proposed DFG applications under £12,000. The means test will be on the disabled person (the applicant). There is no means test for a child application under the age of 16 or if they are between 16-19 and in full time education.

The RAS-HIA reserve the right to means test any DFG applicant for proposed adaptation works if deemed necessary. For example: - If further works are envisaged before the grant is approved or commenced on site. Please note: In some instances, the client and/or applicant may be expected to self-fund unforeseen or additional works.

For all cases that are expected to exceed £30,000 the management panel will meet to decide how next to proceed. All monies above £30,000 (including that for a child application) will need to be self-funded. No grant will be approved until funding is determined.

## **7. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS – (Exclusions)**

Extensions, Garage Conversions, and Outbuildings will only be considered if no feasible adaptation can be deemed reasonable and practicable, necessary, and appropriate within the footprint of the property, by the adaptations team.

All requests for the above will also take into consideration exceptional circumstances and the £30k grant limit. (Please note: If an applicant wishes to fund the extension or conversion themselves or wish to pay the additional funding above the grant limit , this can also be considered – Please see paragraph below).

In the first instance all proposals will be considered to adapt and / or convert the existing accommodation in the original footprint of the property. The exceptional situation/circumstance must be agreed by the RAS-HIA management panel and supported by a Senior OT recommendation (subject to means test and grant limit) that is deemed eligible for a grant provided they are necessary, appropriate, reasonable and practical.

If the applicant requests adaptations for an Extension, Garage Conversion or Outbuildings and wish to build this themselves, they will be required to undertake the following before a DFG is considered or approved: -

- have gained planning permission (if required)
- built the additional structure as habitable space which forms part of the existing property
- received Building Control completion sign off / certificate
- used their own funds to pay for the above (no DFG or discretionary grant funding will be granted)



A DFG is in effect a one-off good faith grant payment funded by Ealing RAS-HIA to provide a specific adaptation for the need of the client and as identified by the OT. Therefore, after the defect's liability period has ended (which is subject to 6 months period following the Practical Completion date) and the grant has been signed off by a Senior Surveyor and OT) any ongoing maintenance, repairs, servicing or guarantees associated with the installed adaptation becomes the obligation and responsibility of the grant recipient on completion of the grant works.

Any equipment provided through the grant will be covered by the standard warranty and after this time all maintenance and repairs are the sole responsibility of the applicant. The client can request a quote for extending the manufacturer's warranty with the company directly of which they will have to privately fund.

Please note all DFG grants may be subject to a full electrical, gas and asbestos report prior to commencement of works. However, any identified issues not related to the proposed DFG will become the obligation and responsibility of the owner / tenant / grant applicant to rectify.

Overcrowding is not considered when determining the most appropriate scheme. Recommendations such as construction of an additional room will not be considered to deal with overcrowding.

Two or more adaptations of the same type are not permitted within the property (unless under exceptional circumstances).

Refitting or repairing adaptations previously provided which have been damaged or removed by the applicant or member of their family is prohibited under a DFG's.

No grant can be repaid to clients / contractors for retrospective works including repairs to adaptations undertaken.

If there are other significant areas of disrepair within a property, outside of the areas where DFG is being provided, e.g., Category 1 Hazards, illegal or unsafe conversions of loft spaces, or other works which contravene Building Regulations and Planning policies, no grant will be approved, and no monies paid until the issues have been resolved.

## **8. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS (Residence and Ownership)**

The property must be for the person with a disability and be their main or only residence to be eligible to be adapted. The applicant must be residing in the property, and if that is not currently the case, (i.e. the resident is in hospital and awaiting discharge) then the person with a disability must intend to occupy it as their main or only residence once discharged and for the duration of the grant condition period. The grant condition period is for ten years and starts when all works are completed (this is known as practical completion) and once signed off by the RAS-HIA surveyor and OT.

In cases where the applicant lives at the proposed property to be adapted part of the time. The Council will award a DFG in relation to the sole or main residence of the applicant and at only one property. This property may or may not be within the Borough of Ealing. The Authority would only be liable for providing a mandatory grant to any property within the Borough.



If the applicant is an owner occupier, then an Owner's Certificate must be obtained. The Owner's Certificate needs to certify that the applicant has or proposes to acquire an owning interest in the property, and that the person with a disability intends to live in the property, as their main or only residence, during the course of the grant condition period.

If the applicant is a tenant, then a Tenant's Certificate must be obtained. The Tenant's Certificate needs to certify that the application is a tenant's application, and that the tenant (or the person with a disability), intends to live in the property, as their main or only residence, during the course of the grant condition period. For rented properties an Owner's Certificate is also needed to be provided by the owner.

If the applicant is a Housing Association (HA) / Registered Social Landlord (RSL), written consent and permissions will be required from the HA / RSL before any works are approved. No feasibility study for any preferred scheme will be undertaken by RAS-HIA.

If the applicant lives in a mobile property, i.e. houseboat, caravan or mobile home then an Owner Occupation Certificate must be obtained. The Owner-Occupation Certificate needs to certify that the application is an occupier's application, and that the occupier, (or the person with a disability, intends to live in a house boat, caravan or mobile home, as their main or only residence, during the course of the grant. For mobile rented properties an Owner's Certificate also needs to be provided by the owner. A consent certificate, consenting to the work being carried out, is also required from each person, apart from the applicant, who is entitled to possession of the premises where the houseboat is moored, or caravan or mobile home are pitched.

Please note: When a DFG is completed the ownership and responsibility of **ALL** installed adaptations becomes that of the client / owner of the property. If a repair is required to specialist equipment outside of the warranty period i.e. stairlifts, steplifts, hoists etc, please make an enquiry to RAS-HIA whom may be able to assist you under a discretionary grant depending on eligibility criteria and available grant funding.

## 9. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS – (Legal charges & repayment)

In accordance with the legislation set out in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008, where the adaptation is carried out to a property which is privately owned the cost of the work over £5,000k will be registered. The RAS-HIA place a legal charge on the property through the Local Land Charges. (The Local Land Charge will remain on the register for ten years after the grant work has been completed and the grant paid).

Ealing Council will register a Local Land Charge to this effect. On the tenth anniversary of the Land Charge, it will be cancelled. NB: The grant must also be repaid in full if the owner or disabled person disposes of the property or fails to comply with any of the grant conditions, within ten years of the date we certify that the works have been completed – after defects liability period (this is known as the practical completion date).

Ealing Council will waive the above condition and remove the Land Charge in certain circumstances and / or, if an Occupational Therapist or medical practitioner certifies that the disabled person named in the application is no longer able to use the adaptations. The condition will also be removed if the applicant has deceased (proof may be required).

The existence of this charge will be notified to potential purchasers of the property who carry out a local authority search if the property is being sold. If the property is sold or otherwise changes ownership within ten years of the completion date, the Council will normally require repayment of the grant, however each case will be judged on its own merits as detailed on the Repayment Conditions in the application form the owner is required to sign.

If you are an owner-occupier, and you receive a DFG for more than £5,000, the council will place a land charge on the property for 10 years. Therefore, if you sell the property within 10 years of the adaptation's completion date, then RAS-HIA can request for the sum of monies to be repaid if the grant was over £5,000. Subject to the grant not being more than £30k the maximum we can ask you to repay is £10,000.

The maximum repayable amount at the change of ownership is £5,000 for a mandatory DFG up to £30,000, however in some cases where discretion is shown, and a grant is paid by the Council is in excess of £30,000 then then a legal charge may be placed on the property for the additional amount for a period of ten years.

If the agreement for the provision of the adaptations is cancelled or if the adaptations are removed within 10 years of the charge being added to land registry, the applicant as stated on the application will need to pay Ealing Council (upon demand) the full cost incurred by the Council in respect of the adaptations and any extended warranty(s).

## **10. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS – (Tendering & Contractors)**

In accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) and RAS-HIA local policy three quotations are required from the Council's list of approved contractors who have expressed interest in tendering for such work. The applicant is not permitted to select or use their own contractor unless under extenuating circumstances and written agreement sought from the RAS-HIA management panel.

The contractor must be vetted and be trading as an official registered business. With proof of the following: -

- Hold valid Public liability insurance and Employers Liability Insurance
- Evidence of their CIS (Construction Industry Scheme - HMRC tax scheme for contractors and sub-contractors involved in the construction industry status)
- Health and safety policy, (including a health and safety method statement/risk assessment and construction phase plan for the works).
- Evidence that they are a competent contractor - registered on Constructionline.
- Evidence of their work on similar projects being of a satisfactory standard.
- Evidence of being registered with either CHAS or SSIP certified.

RAS-HIA will make arrangements for contractors to undertake the works, however, the contract is between the applicant and the contractor and the Council will not be liable for disputes arising between the parties. In the event of any disputes, between the applicant and contractor, RAS-HIA will assist to resolve these, but if this is not possible, it may be necessary for the applicant to seek legal advice to remedy any dispute.

RAS-HIA ensure that all approved contractors have a responsibility under Health and Safety laws and Construction, Design, Management regulations (CDM) to ensure that the

work they are undertaking is safe and the applicant must comply with all requirements as advised by the contractor and Council.

The lowest quotation that meets the specification usually wins the tender, however the management reserve the right to select a higher value tender provided based on extenuating circumstances i.e. the winning contractor cannot start the works on the specified timeframe or underpriced tenders were returned.

To ensure value for money, RAS-HIA will estimate the cost of job using a schedule of works, (specification of works written by an OT or Surveyor within RAS-HIA) as a benchmark for comparing the value of tenders.

There are exceptions to the tendering process such as stair lifts, through floor lifts, step lifts, ceiling track hoists, ramps, automated door / window entry systems and automatic wash-dry WCs that form part of the provision of equipment only DFG's. These items have to be recommended by the OT under a DFG and ownership and responsibility of the specialist equipment becomes that of the applicant to maintain, repair, clean once the manufacturer's warranty has expired.

When the DFG or specialist equipment is no longer required or needed by the applicant after the grant conditions expired, the applicant may choose to remove such items at their own discretion and funding. Please note if the applicant is found to be in breach of grant conditions then the demand of monies for the DFG will be sought by the council and legal action may be taken.

## **11. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS – (Grant Conditions)**

Where a local housing authority has approved an application for a grant they may, with the consent of the Secretary of State, impose other conditions as they think fit. They can require repayment of all or part of the grant, plus interest, if the conditions are breached.

The following is Ealing Councils RAS-HIA Grant conditions for DFG Services: -

- RAS-HIA will act as an agent (often referred to as the Contract administrator) on behalf of the applicant in every case, to enhance customer care, ensure quality of work and safeguard against fraud.
- Work must be carried out by an approved contractor selected by the Council's RAS - HIA from whom estimates were submitted (unless the authority directs otherwise) following Ealing's CPR
- No work must be carried out, and no work will be paid for, unless the Council has sent a letter to the applicant approving the necessary funding.
- Payments will be made directly to the contractor once works are verified that they have been carried out in accordance with the specification and subsequent receipt of an appropriate invoice
- All DFG official applications must be approved within 6 months of receipt of a valid application.
- On all DFG's, works must be completed within 12 months from date of grant approval, although RAS-HIA may extend this time.
- No assistance is available for work already started or which is covered by an insurance policy.
- The applicant may be liable for all additional / unforeseen works and for all costs above the grant limit (payable before work start or continue).

- If unforeseen work (which is related to the grant work) becomes necessary during the grant work, the council may increase the grant limit if necessary up to the under mandatory grant limit, once reviewed by the management panel subject to additional funding from external funding streams being considered available.

Where an application for a DFG has been approved, but the works have not yet been completed, the grant can be cancelled if any of the following reasons apply: -

- The approved adaptation works cease to be necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled applicant as determined by a senior medical care professional or senior manager
- The approved adaptation ceases to be reasonable or practicable. This could occur when there are excessive changes, where there are space constraints or where moving existing services is prohibitively expensive.
- The disabled applicant ceases to occupy the property, or it ceases to be their intention to occupy it for the period of 5 years
- The disabled applicant passes away

Upon installation all equipment installed through a DFG belongs to the applicant / owner of the property and becomes their responsibility of the property. The future cost of equipment warranties and servicing are not DFG eligible unless included in the quote.

Servicing and responsibility on expiry of the extended warranty lies with the owner/s. When an installation can no longer be serviced/parts can no longer be obtained etc the disabled person can be assessed for a further DFG to meet the cost of replacement. Confirmation to proceed will need to be obtained from adult SSOT.

If eligibility criteria are met RAS-HIA may offer a discretionary grant to meet the cost of repairs on expiry of the warranty, if informed of the issue prior to any repair works being carried out and subject to funding and eligibility for a discretionary grant.

Works such as replacement of rotted flooring, or strengthening the floor for a level access shower, electrical repairs, or additional electrical works to enable the adaptation works to be carried out safely and dealing with low water pressure can be considered as eligible DFG costs.

## **12. OTHER GRANTS – Discretionary Funded Grants (Subject to funding availability annually)**

The RRO removed most of the prescriptive housing renewal grant legislation contained in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. Article 3 of the RRO introduced wide ranging discretionary powers to allow Councils to develop different forms of assistance to meet local needs.

Ealing Council's RAS-HIA have made use of the RRO provisions to enable us to use funds received from the Better Care Fund and Ealing Councils Capital Programmes more flexibly, responsively, and effectively. These grants are subject to available funding, and the Council use its powers to offer discretionary assistance as detailed in this section. RAS-HIA work in partnership to deliver the following Handyperson Services (HP): -

- Handyperson Grant – General advice and information
- Handyperson Grant – General – basic
- Handyperson Plus Grant – Essential works
- Handyperson Plus Grant – Extended include
  - Small Repairs (Through the Handy person Plus Repairs)
  - Fire Safety Measures
  - Energy Efficiency Measures
  - Hospital Discharges
  - Trips and Falls Prevention Works
  - Home Safety Checks
  - Boiler and Heating Repair / Replacement
  - Safe and secure home security improvements
  - Grab rails, Galvanised rails etc
  - DFG enabling works

## **13. HANDYPERSON GRANT - (General advice and information)**

RAS-HIA can help owner-occupiers with advice over the phone, who do not meet the eligibility criteria for the various grants, and do not qualify for grant funding under the means-testing criteria detailed in this booklet. RAS-HIA can assist by offering you advice over the phone or email on: -

- Proposed repairs work funded by yourself
- Proposed adaptations work funded by yourself

Advice and guidance on works can relate to housing repairs and/or adaptations and may include Roof repairs, doors and/or window repairs/replacement, damp/timber treatment, electrical and plumbing services etc.

Advice is given by qualified professionals with expertise and knowledge within the field of Major adaptations. Ealing Council's RAS-HIA take no responsibility for using / following the advice and guidance given.

## 14. HANDYPERSON GRANT - (Basic – General)

The HP service arranges minor jobs in the home for older, disabled or otherwise vulnerable people. RAS-HIA administers the HP service and will assist with all aspects of the grant process. To qualify for the HP Service the client must be:

- Aged 60 or over (and not in paid employment)
- or Disabled
- or A carer
- or A single parent in receipt of an income-related benefit\* living with child(ren) under 16.

Please note that property assessments may be carried out at this time by the Handyperson contractor in conjunction with the Fall safe, Fire Safe projects and Healthy Homes Ealing. Typical works which can be carried out include: -

- Replacing lightbulbs
- Setting thermostats/timers
- Fixing and supplying internal / external grab rails and handrails (where adequate fixing can be established)
- Fitting smoke/carbon monoxide alarms, (but not supplying them)
- Unblocking or sealing around sink/basin/bath/shower tray
- Unblocking toilets, replacing toilet seats
- Refixing/regrouting small numbers of loose wall tiles
- Fixing down hazardous carpets, rugs, trailing electrical leads etc.
- Advising on energy efficiency and condensation/dampness
- Safety and security measures including changing of basic door locks, fitting door chains and locking mechanisms.
- Assembling small items of flat pack furniture or shelving
- Changing tap washers (not plumbing works)
- Moving furniture to create a microenvironment upon hospital discharges
- Fitting key safes
- Fitting new plugs (not electrical)

Please note:

- All clients must have the power or duty to carry out the works. Therefore, If you are a council, registered social landlord or private tenant we cannot carry out works for which your landlord is responsible; Please consult your tenancy officer or landlord first before contacting us.
- No gas, electrical, major plumbing, gardening, decorating or major building work is permitted under this grant
- Clients must agree to a brief survey to identify what work is necessary
- All materials to be supplied or paid for by the client
- No works will be permitted above step ladder height including fitting safety cameras, lights and roof repairs.



## 15. HANDYPERSON GRANT - (Type 1 – Specialist repairs)

The Handyperson Plus Service provides a range of assistance to enable vulnerable people to live in their homes in safety and comfort. RAS-HIA administers the scheme and assists with all aspects of the process.

TYPE 1: Disabled equipment repairs (e.g. stairlift, hoist) used by a disabled person; installing safety equipment (e.g. alarms), or work requested by SS/NHS/CCG at the home of a hospital patient to enable them to live independently. Assistance can also include council initiatives for energy efficiency schemes.

## 16. HANDYPERSON GRANT - (Type 2- Essential repair H&S)

The Handyperson Plus Service provides a range of assistance to enable vulnerable people to live in their homes in safety and comfort. RAS-HIA administers the scheme and assists with all aspects of the process.

TYPE 2: Essential works to enable vulnerable people to remain in their own homes (preventing care/hospital admissions) limited to £2,500 in any 12-month period. Works can be carried out for households in which all occupants over the age of 18 are in receipt of a Means-Tested Benefit. In exceptional circumstances work over this amount can be approved by the management panel subject to additional funding from external funding streams being available.

Enabling works for DFG's such as heating, energy efficiency measures and security improvements can also be provided under this grant.

## 17. HANDYPERSON GRANT - (Grant Conditions)

The following grant conditions apply to all Handyperson and handyperson plus services:-

- Client must be an owner-occupier or private sector tenant (not a council tenant or a tenant of a RSL / HA).
- The applicant must pay all costs above the grant limit (payable before work starts).
- The applicant and all adults (over 18) living at the property must be receiving a means-tested benefit shown on page 14 (or have been means-tested as part of an adaptation application).
- The applicant must have the power or duty to carry out the works
- New applications cannot be applied for within 12 months of a previous grant closing (date of last payment confirmed and verified by RAS-HIA)
- If unforeseen work (which is related to the grant work) becomes necessary during the grant work, the council may increase the grant limit if necessary, once reviewed by the management panel subject to additional funding from external funding streams being available.
- Each visit is limited to 90 minutes of work on site.
- Maximum of 3 (6 if the carer is also living at the home) visits in any 12-month period.
- Clients must sign and agree the checklist, which also identifies other work/hazards.
- All materials (not supplied by RAS-HIA) to be supplied or paid for by the client.
- Clients must have the power or duty to carry out the works.
-



## 18. GENERAL - (Fees and Ancillary charges)

Ealing Council RAS-HIA will act as agent (often referred to as the Contract administrator) in every case to enhance customer care, ensure quality of work and guard against fraud. The RAS-HIA will apply the following fees to services provided and will be included in any grant approval.

Fees can be charged to the client for the work carried out on their behalf by the HIA. This fee can form part of the grant application as set out in the Housing Renewal Grants (Services and Charges) Order 1996.

Please note: Local authority administrative fees will be included in the grant approval in accordance with section 169 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 and are as follows.: -

- Confirmation of an owner's interest when sought by a local authority.
- Technical and structural surveys.
- Design and preparation of plans and drawings.
- Preparations of schedules of relevant works.
- Assistance in completion of forms. And the application process
- Financial advice on meeting the costs of works not met by grant.
- Building Regulations fees)
- Planning application fees) for the benefit of a disabled person
- Listed building consent fees.
- Conservation area fees.
- Obtaining estimates.
- Advice of contracts.
- Consideration of tenders.
- Supervision of the relevant works.
- Disconnection/reconnection of electricity, gas, water or drainage utilities related to relevant works.
- Payment of contractors.
- Regular contact with the applicant during work in progress.
- Site visits
- In the case of an application for DFG, the services and charges of a private occupational therapist in relation to the relevant works are also specified.

### Disabled Facilities Grants

- 20% of the cost of the works subject to a minimum of £350 for Private Housing and Housing Associations.

### Council Housing Adaptations

- 14% of the cost of the works subject to a minimum of £350 for Council Housing Stock.

### Handyperson Plus Service

- Type 1 - fixed fee £35
- Type 2 - 10% of the cost of the works, subject to a minimum of £350

### Handyperson Service

- Fixed fee £35.
- VAT will be charged at the prevailing rate, if applicable.

## 19. GENERAL - (Restriction on provision of services)

The following highlights restrictions that cannot be grant funded by the RAS-HIA: -

### Disabled Facilities Grants

- Work that is not reasonable, practicable, necessary and appropriate.
- Provision or repair of appliances and portable items such as cookers, fridges, mobile hoists, etc.
- Extensions, Loft Conversions, Garage Conversions and works to Outbuildings (unless for a child and agreed by the management panel)
- Paying for any adaptation works retrospectively
- Adaptations to accommodate overcrowding within the property

### Handyperson/Handyperson Plus Services

- Maintenance work, housework, decorating, etc.
- Personal care (washing, etc.)
- Provision or repairs to appliances such as cookers, fridges, etc.
- Provision of floorcoverings, curtains, wardrobes or furniture
- Work to conservatories, garages, or outbuildings
- Provision of extra living accommodation or loft conversions
- Home improvements
- Gardening/Fencing
- Plumbing or Electrical works will only qualify under Handyperson Plus services under eligible criteria

## 20. GENERAL - (Timescale and Service Standards)

RAS-HIA will aim to meet the following standards:

### Disabled Facilities Grants applications

- After receiving a recommendation from SSOT or NHS partner RAS-HIA will issue acknowledgement within 5 working days that the DFG request has been received.
- Urgent cases will be visited within 10 working days, and non-urgent cases will be visited in order of recommendation received.
- Within 24 weeks of receiving an eligible OT referral the case RAS-HIA will:-
  - complete any necessary means-test
  - send out and receive application forms
  - refer the case to an OT and Surveyor
  - design a suitable adaptation scheme and subject to receipt of clients signed agreement to the scheme
  - prepare a schedule of works / specification
  - tender the works
  - send grant for approval
- Decide approval status on proposed grant within 6 months of receiving the full application (this includes all necessary information e.g. proof of home ownership or landlord consent). Approve the relevant funding for the work within 24 weeks of receipt of referral.
- Complete the adaptation within 12 months from the date of grant approval.
- Pay grant monies due within 28 days of a valid claim (invoice) on certified work.

#### Handyperson Service (Basic):

- Email an instruction to the contractor within 24 hours of receipt of your service request (excluding weekends and public holidays).
- Require the contractor to make contact with the applicant (to arrange a visit) within 48 hrs after receiving our instruction.
- Carry out the Handyperson visits and works within 10 working days of receipt of referral from Handyperson Co-ordinator
- Please note: Hospital Discharges are dealt with within 24hrs time frame or subject to organised timings

#### Handyperson Plus Grants:

- Complete all paperwork, receive application forms, gain relevant permissions and consent within 12 weeks of receipt of valid request (validation)
- Completed application form sent out and received, relevant drawings and specification of works sent out to tender within 12 weeks of validation
- Funding approved within 12 weeks of grant application (subject to discretionary funding being available).
- Complete the adaptation within 12 months from the date of grant approval.
- Pay grant monies due within 28 days of a valid claim (invoice) on certified work

## 21. GENERAL - (Means Tested Benefits – Eligible)

The following is a list of benefits which, for the purpose of this policy document are regarded as income related benefits: -

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income related Employment Support Allowance
- Working Tax Credit (provided the award is based on income below set threshold, currently £16,385, subject to change)
- Child Tax Credit less £16,385 (subject to current income thresholds)
- Pension Credit with Guarantee Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Universal Credit (on a means tested benefit)
- Council Tax Support (not including single person occupancy of 25% discount)

## 22. GENERAL – (Abbreviations)

Glossary We have tried to avoid using acronyms, but you will see some abbreviations in the text.

BCF - Better Care Fund Care

CCG - Clinical Commissioning Group

CPR - Contract Procedure Rules

DFG - Disabled Facilities Grant

DHSC - Department of Health and Social Care

FOI - Freedom of Information request

HGCR - Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

HIA - Home Improvement Agency

HP - Handyperson Scheme

HRA - Housing Revenue Account

MHCLG - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

OT - Occupational Therapist

RAS - Repairs and Adaptations Service

RRO - Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002

SSOT- Social Services Occupational Therapists

## 23. HOW TO CONTACT US

If you need more information about grants, or require further information in your own language, or are not satisfied with our service, please contact us at:

Ealing Council's Repairs and Adaptations Service  
Incorporating The Home Improvement Agency and Handyperson Scheme  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Perceval House 14-16 Uxbridge Road  
London W5 2HL  
020 8825 6070  
Email: [housinggrants@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:housinggrants@ealing.gov.uk)  
Or handyperson scheme  
[handypersonreferrals@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:handypersonreferrals@ealing.gov.uk)  
Response during office hours (Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm).

Disabled Facilities Grants - If your circumstances have changed, please contact the Social Services Occupational Therapist team on 0208 825 8000

## 24. PRIVACY STATEMENT

As part of the DFG process, we need to collect certain information to assist with the processing of applications. This is covered under the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

The council has a legal obligation to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and EU General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018. Ras-HIA respect your personal data and will not share it with any third party unless consent is gained first.

In accordance with GDPR at Ealing Council - Repairs and Adaptations Service/Home Improvement Agency we take your privacy seriously and will only use your personal information to administer your grant and to provide the products and services you have requested from us.

As part of the DFG process, information will need to be shared with other organisations, as follows:

- Adult Social Care Services
- Children's Services
- NHS and CCG Partners
- Ealing Council Legal Services
- Registered Social Housing Providers
- HM Land Registry and local land charges
- Contractors engaged for the purpose of delivering grant assistance - Only limited information will be shared with contractors
- Ealing Council Complaints Department
- Ealing Council Energy Department
- Local Government Ombudsman
- London Fire Brigade

For further details on how your data is used and stored. Please visit [https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201045/data\\_protection](https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201045/data_protection) or write to Information and data compliance, Business Services Group, Perceval House 3. SE, 14-16 Uxbridge Road, London, W5 2HL or Telephone [020 8825 5124/5512](tel:02088255124)