

Report to Portfolio Holder for Public Protection

Subject: Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance Policy 2025

Date: August 2025

Author: Food, Health and Housing Manager

Wards Affected

All wards

Purpose

To approve the amended Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance Policy 2025

Key Decision

Not a key decision

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- 1) The amended Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance Policy 2025 (**see appendix A**) is approved in order to enhance the services available to eligible residents.
- 2) The existing Housing Assistance Grant conditions 2023 remain unchanged and are retained for use (**see Appendix B**).
- 3) The existing Disabled Facilities Grant 2017 conditions remain unchanged and are retained for use (**see appendix C**)

1 Background

1.1 The Better Care Fund (BCF) has been used by Government since 2013 to distribute funds to Local Authorities and the NHS for health and care related services. The BCF is allocated to upper-tier authorities by

Government and part of the allocation is ring-fenced for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) and passed onto District Councils. Nottinghamshire County Council distributes the BCF upon receipt of a proposed plan of expenditure.

1.2 For 2025/26 Gedling Borough Council was allocated £1,475,616 from the BCF to spend on mandatory disabled facilities grants and associated grants and assistance. The Council currently has a Private Sector Housing and Assistance Policy from 2023 which defines the basis of the grant awards to residents in the borough. This report seeks approval to adopt a new updated Private Sector Housing and Assistance Policy 2025.

1.3 Key changes to the policy are summarised below:

- Increasing the grant limit for the Housing Assistance (discretionary Warm Homes on Prescription Grant) from £8,000 to £10,000 to accommodate rising equipment and materials costs.
- Amended typical costs of stairclimber from £5,000 to £8,000 to reflect the typical increased costs of this equipment.
- Increase in the grant limit for Discretionary Grant for Clients with less than £6,000 capital savings from £3,500 to £10,000 to accommodate the costs of common adaptations to fund works to install a level access shower and a stairlift or works to an equivalent amount.
- Introduction of a Discretionary Armed Forces Personnel and Immediate Family Grant which amends the test of resources to disregard armed forces compensation and proposes to fast track this form of grant assistance. This is in accordance with the council's commitment to support armed forces veterans and their families in line with the armed forces covenant
- Amendments throughout the document to replace reference to a schedule of works with a 'design brief' in accordance with changes to comply with current building regulations and the council and contractor roles.
- Replacement of Head of Environment with the Director of Place to consider appeals relating to the policy implementation in accordance with the new council management structure.

The updated policy does not differ fundamentally from the existing documentation; the main aim is to ensure that the policy remains up-to-

date and recognises that building and works costs have risen in recent years.

2 Proposal

That:

- 2.1 The amended Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance Policy 2025 (**see appendix A**) is approved in order to enhance the services available to eligible residents.
- 2.2 The existing Housing Assistance grant conditions 2023 remain unchanged and are retained for use to explain the terms of the grants (**see appendix B**).
- 2.3 The Mandatory and Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant Conditions 2017 remain unchanged and are retained for use to explain the terms of the grants (**see appendix C**).

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 Retain the existing Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance Policy from 2023, and do not amend the policy to incorporate the changes described in the background section. This will not enhance the services available to eligible residents and will limit the ability to be able to spend the sizeable budget for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants and discretionary assistance. As per paragraph 4.1 below, there was a carry forward of (committed) funding from the previous 2024/2025 allocation and a healthy Government grant allocation for 2025/26. There is a concern that if the policy is not amended it will reduce the likelihood of fully utilising the funding and furthermore there has been a rise in local building costs and a council ambition to provide greater support for ex-armed forces personnel and their families. The revised policy aims to address these cost and policy matters.
- 3.2 Develop an alternative Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance policy to incorporate alternative proposals. However, the proposals outlined in the Policy at Appendix A have been developed in conjunction with other Nottinghamshire Local Authorities with the aim of delivering a consistent service across the County. The key changes summarised at paragraph 1.3 are to incorporate specific updates to the current policy which is otherwise considered fit for purpose.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The BCF allocation for 2025/26 is £1,475,616 and the total funding available including carry forward from the previous year is £1,828,512. However Nottinghamshire County Council retain £141,921 from the Gedling Borough Council allocation to deliver the partnership Handy Person Preventative Adaptation service to provide low cost aid and minor adaptations including key safes.
- 4.2 The Disabled Facilities Grants service is fully funded by the BCF allocation from central Government via Nottinghamshire County Council. Expenditure for this service will be accommodated within the approved budgetary provision.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The policy subject to this report sets out the mandatory and discretionary assistance the council is able to provide in accordance with the legal provisions set out in the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.

The provision of Disabled Facilities Grants is regulated by the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 which places a mandatory statutory duty on the Council to provide grant assistance to qualifying disabled persons to undertake a range of adaptations to their homes which are “necessary and appropriate” to meet their needs. The grant is subject to a means test (except in the case of those under 18).

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 gives Local Authorities the power to provide assistance (either directly or indirectly) to adapt, improve or repair their living conditions or to relocate. This includes discretionary powers to offer financial assistance beyond the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (which is capped at £30,000¹). However, the assistance can only be provided where the Local Authority has adopted a policy for the provision of such assistance (Article 4 of the 2002 Order).

Where a discretionary top-up is awarded, this would be secured against the property as a Local Land Charge, as per the existing policy.

¹ Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008 (SI 2008/1189) Article 2

6 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 Overall the proposed policy will have a positive impact on disabled residents, older people and families with young children who are deemed eligible for assistance. Further information is available in the Equalities Impact Assessment at Appendix D.

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 The revisions to the Housing Assistance (discretionary Warm Homes on Prescription Grant) will increase the cost of works that can be assisted. This has the potential to maintain the level of energy efficiency improvements that can be delivered through this scheme. The most common hazards that are addressed through this grant include excess cold and dampness and common remedial works include improved more efficient heating systems, insulation and double glazing. These improvements can lead to some minor reductions in household carbon emissions. The scale of reductions is small due to the limited number of households that can be supported from the funding available.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 **Appendix A** – Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance Policy 2025
- 8.2 **Appendix B** – Mandatory and Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant Conditions
- 8.3 **Appendix C** – Housing Assistance Grant Conditions
- 8.4 **Appendix D** – Equalities Impact Assessment of the Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance Policy 2025

9 Background Papers

- 9.1 None

10 Reasons for Recommendations

- 10.1 To enable the Council to deliver the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant Service and associated Discretionary Housing Grants and Assistance.

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Monitoring Officer