

Isle of Anglesey County Council	
Report to:	Executive Committee
Date:	29th of November 2022
Subject:	Disabled Facilities Grant Policy Change
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Alun Mummery
Head of Service / Director:	Ned Michael, Head of Housing Services nedmichael@ynysmon.llyw.cymru
Report Author: Tel: E-mail:	Neil P Edwards
Local Members:	All

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s

R1 – That the Executive Approve the removal of the financial means test for small and medium works up to the value of £10,000, from the application process for Disabled Facilities Grant.

1. Background

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 for individuals that need assistance to meet the costs.

As part of the process of applying for the Grant individuals contact Adult Services in order to arrange an assessment of the individuals needs for adaptations by an Occupational Therapist.

The works required which have been identified through the assessment would be identified in a Social Services Adaptations Care Plan for the individual.

During the process of carrying out the assessment the Occupational Therapist will explain to the individual the assistance available from the Council and will also inform clients of other suppliers which could provide the adaptations privately should they wish to follow this route.

Pre-pandemic the budget of £750,000 met demand, and was spent fully within the financial year. During the pandemic, demand has decreased, mainly due to client shielding and reduced number of physical visits by OT's and Technical Officers.

However, the last 6 months has seen cases that were put on hold during the pandemic, come back into the system. A number of these being substantial grant awards. This is likely to put more pressure on the budget of £750,000.

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s

Welsh Government have asked Local Authorities to remove means testing for small and medium adaptations. To assist financially, each authority will receive a 10% uplift in its Enable budget to cover the additional cost.

The current Enable Grant Allocation is £92,400

2. Definition of Values of Works

- Small – works costing up to £1,000.
- Medium – works costing between £1,000 and £10,000.
- All works costing over £10,000 would be deemed as Large adaptations and would continue to be means tested.

Type of works which are generally small and medium?

- Small Adaptations – these are generally minor, urgent measures, such as grab rails. These works are already non-means tested, delivered through Enable allocation by a Care and Repair Agency, Canllaw Eryri in this instance.
- Medium Adaptations– Stairlifts, bathroom adaptations, access ramps etc. These works are currently means tested. On average, there are around 6 approved applications, per year, where the client have contributed following means testing.

3. Drivers for removing means testing from the DFG process:

- Time – Means testing can be a lengthy process. Client, who are often elderly/vulnerable, may not have access to relevant bank account, pension income details. Welsh Government record each LA's KPI for delivering DFGs. Removing means testing is likely to speed up the application process
- Clients doing without – Pre-pandemic, a piece of work was carried out on means testing. Over a 3 year period, almost half the care plans referred to Housing, would be closed/cancelled, for various reasons. Of those, 50% were closed/cancelled, for some reason relating to the means testing. This could leave a number of vulnerable people without the adaptations recommended by Social Services.

On average, the amount received as client contribution by Housing is less than £10,000 per annum.

4. Possible Effect on Demand

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In a post-pandemic world, it is unclear how demand for DFGs will change. Housing receive referrals from Social Services in the form of an Adaptations Care Plan (ACP), Prepared by an Occupational Therapist. All clients will have had their needs assessed, prior to the preparation of the ACP.

However, if we return to pre-pandemic levels of referrals, there could be an additional (approx.) 30 applications a year. The average value of DFG works is approximately £6,000 which could result in an additional an additional cost of £180,000.

If we were to proceed to remove the means test for small and medium adaptations and were to see an increase in the demand as noted above it is likely that this would have a negative effect on the time taken to complete adaptations as it is unlikely that the budget for DFG's would increase.

B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this option?

The option of utilising the Enable budget, as a standalone non-means tested grant, could be considered. Currently, Enable policy, provides urgent adaptations for palliative client, and/or to enable urgent hospital discharge. Some LAs, have made their Enable funding a non-means tested grant, for works up to a certain value. This makes it a first come, first served grant. There may come a point in the financial year, where the grant is fully committed. Leaving client waiting till the following year.

Why is do nothing not an option?

Welsh Government have requested each LA provide some form of non-means tested assistance.

C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?

Policy change.

Ch – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?

Yes

D – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?

A sum of £750,000 has been included with the Council's Budget for 2022/23 for Disabled Facilities Grants.

D – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?

Additionally an Enable Grant allocation of £92,400 has been received for 2022/23.

Dd – Assessing the potential impact (if relevant):

1	How does this decision impact on our long term needs as an Island?	Providing the people of the island wider access to adaptations.
2	Is this a decision which it is envisaged will prevent future costs / dependencies on the Authority? If so, how?	Yes – keeping more people safe and independent in their homes. Potentially reducing hospital admissions and dependence on health care providers.
3	Have we been working collaboratively with other organisations to come to this decision? If so, please advise whom.	Welsh LAs, Care and Repair – Looking at historic means test data and DFG demand.
4	Have Anglesey citizens played a part in drafting this way forward, including those directly affected by the decision? Please explain how.	No.
5	Note any potential impact that this decision would have on the groups protected under the Equality Act 2010.	Works though DFG carried out to benefit elderly and/or disabled (including mental health) people.
6	If this is a strategic decision, note any potential impact that the decision would have on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.	Removal of means test for medium adaptations, potentially allows access to more people who would otherwise be unable to carry out the works to remain safe and independent in their homes.
7	Note any potential impact that this decision would have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.	No impact. Form, documents and service available bilingually.

E – Who did you consult?**What did they say?**

1	Chief Executive / Senior Leadership Team (SLT) (mandatory)	Supportive of the intention.
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	Supportive of the intention.
3	Legal / Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	Supportive of the intention.
4	Human Resources (HR)	n/a
5	Property	n/a

E – Who did you consult?		What did they say?
6	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	n/a
7	Procurement	n/a
8	Scrutiny	
9	Local Members	

F - Appendices:
Pre Approval Report DFG

Ff - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):