

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.

1. 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 • 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

2. 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.

3. Panel approach, decision and delegation

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	<p>Approval up to £15,000 may be given by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Leader • Service Manager <p>Approval over £15,000 may be given by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the relevant Assistant Director, Deputy Chief Executive or Chief Executive in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder
City of Lincoln Council	<p>Panel to be made up of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Sector housing Team Leader • Case officer • Referring body
East Lindsey District Council	<p>Approval up to £15,000 may be given by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Leader • Service Manager <p>Approval over £15,000 may be given by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the relevant Assistant Director, Deputy Chief Executive or Chief Executive in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder
North Kesteven District Council	<p>Decisions on applications will be made in accordance with the Council's Constitution and Scheme of Delegation</p>
South Holland District Council	<p>Approval up to £15,000 may be given by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Leader • Service Manager <p>Approval over £15,000 may be given by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the relevant Assistant Director, Deputy Chief Executive or Chief Executive in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder
South Kesteven District Council	<p>Decisions on applications will be made in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations as follows:</p> <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	<p>Panel to be made up of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homes, Health and Wellbeing Team Manager Senior Homes, health and Wellbeing Officer • Senior Homelessness Prevention officer • Referring body

Only one 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.

4. 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

4.1. 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.

5. 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.

6. Delegations to amend the Policy and Explanatory Notes

As per the delegations set out in section 10 of the Lincolnshire Discretionary Housing Financial Assistance Policy, the Relevant Senior Manager and Members/ Committees with responsibility for Housing are provided below.

Authority	Delegated authority
Boston Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Director – Wellbeing and Community Leadership, Communities & Operations • Portfolio Holder with responsibility for housing
City of Lincoln Council	TBC through local scrutiny and approval processes
East Lindsey District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Director – Wellbeing and Community Leadership, Communities & Operations • Portfolio Holder with responsibility for housing
North Kesteven District Council	TBC through local scrutiny and approval processes
South Holland District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Director – Wellbeing and Community Leadership, Communities & Operations • Portfolio Holder with responsibility for housing
South Kesteven District Council	TBC through local scrutiny and approval processes
West Lindsey District Council	TBC through local scrutiny and approval processes

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Attachments	Lincolnshire Discretionary Housing Financial Assistance Policy
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