Who to send it to

The housing department of the district, borough, city or unitary council where the home is, often called private sector housing or the home improvement agency. In areas with a county council and district councils, such as Oxfordshire, the district or city council deals with the grant, working with the county council's occupational therapists.

The letter

Replace everything in [square brackets], keep a copy, and note the date you sent it.

[Your name]
[Your address]
[Your phone number]
[Your email address]

[Date]

Private Sector Housing / Home Improvement Agency
[Council name]
[Council address or email address]

Dear Sir or Madam,

Disabled Facilities Grant: [full name of the disabled person], date of birth [date of birth], [address]

I am writing to ask for a Disabled Facilities Grant under Part 1 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, so that [name] can continue to live safely in [his/her] home. [I am [his/her] [relationship] and write with [his/her] agreement / under a registered Lasting Power of Attorney, copy enclosed.]

[Name] has [condition, for example: Parkinson's disease and has had several falls]. [He/She] [owns the home / rents it from (landlord name) / lives in a home owned by (name)] and intends to live there for at least the next five years.

[Name] now has difficulty with [for example: getting upstairs to the only bathroom and bedroom, and getting in and out of the bath]. We believe [he/she] needs [for example: a stairlift and a level-access shower], so that [he/she] can reach the bedroom, toilet and washing facilities safely.

[An occupational therapist from (council or NHS service) assessed (name) on (date) and recommended these adaptations; a copy of the report is enclosed. / (Name) has not yet had an occupational therapy assessment. Please arrange one, or tell me how to request one from adult social care.]

Please:

1. send me the application form and details of the means test, or arrange for someone to help us apply;
2. tell me whether your home improvement agency can help with drawings, quotes and choosing a builder;
3. confirm the date you receive our completed application, as the council must decide within six months of it; and
4. tell me how long you expect the process to take.

We will not start any work until the grant is approved.

Yours faithfully,

[Your signature]
[Your name]
[Your relationship to the person]

Tips

- Do not start the work before the council approves the application in writing, or you may get no grant at all.
- An occupational therapist's assessment is usually the first step. If there has not been one, ask adult social care at the county or unitary council for a needs assessment that includes one.
- The grant is up to £30,000 in England, and some councils give more. For adults, the amount depends on household income and on savings over £6,000; the person may have to pay part of the cost.
- A grant does not affect benefits. You can apply again for the same home if needs change.
- The work should normally be finished within 12 months of approval. Planning permission or building regulations approval, if needed, is applied for separately.

- Smaller items are dealt with separately: if adult social care assesses that someone needs aids or minor adaptations costing £1,000 or less, such as grab rails, it must not charge for them. If you are unhappy with the grant decision, appeal to the council, then complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

The law behind it

Part 1 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. Section 23: the purposes for which a grant must be approved, including getting into and around the home, reaching a bedroom, toilet, bath or shower and washbasin, preparing food, suitable heating, and making the home safe. Section 24(3): the council must be satisfied that the work is necessary and appropriate to meet the disabled person's needs, and reasonable and practicable given the age and condition of the property; a housing authority that is not also the social services authority must consult it. Section 34: the council must decide in writing as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than six months after the application, and give reasons if it refuses. The Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008, article 2: the maximum mandatory grant in England is £30,000. Grants for adults are means-tested; grants for disabled children under 18 are not.

Read more in our guide: Equipment and home adaptations: what is free and how to get it.

Other letters

- Asking the council for a care needs assessment
- Asking the council for a carer's assessment
- Asking for the written financial assessment and a disability-related expenditure review
- Asking for a review or reassessment of care and support
- Asking for an NHS Continuing Healthcare Checklist