

December 2022

## Disability Adaptions for homeowners

- 1. How many grants have been made to private homeowners for disability adaptions from January 2016 until November 2022**

The Housing Executive has approved 6,376 Disabled Facilities Grants for the period 1 January 2016 to 30 November 2022

- 2. How many grants have been made to private homeowners for disability adaptions for single storey disability extensions from January 2016 until November 2022**

The Housing Executive has approved 1,053 Disabled Facilities Grants during the period 1 January 2016 to 30 November 2022 which included a single storey extension.

- 3. How many grants have been made to private homeowners for disability adaptions for double storey disability extensions from January 2016 until November 2022**

The Housing Executive has approved 13 Disabled Facilities Grants during the period 1 January 2016 to 30 November 2022 which included a double storey extension.

- 4. What was the cost of a grant award for a single storey disability extension from January 2016 until January 2022**

The Housing Executive administers grant aid on behalf of the Department for Communities. It will provide funding for those works necessary to fulfil an Occupational Therapist's (OT) recommendations made under the Disabled Facilities Grant legislation.

Approved grant-aid will include all works to a property which will fulfil an OT's recommendations. This may include, but is not limited to, car hard standing, providing access ramps, accommodating construction access restrictions, widening doorways and fitting wider external and internal doors to accommodate a wheelchair user.

There is no standard amount of grant-aid awarded for a single-storey disability extension.

**5. What was the cost of a grant award for a double storey disability extension from January 2016 until November 2022.**

The Housing Executive administers grant aid on behalf of the Department for Communities. It will provide funding for those works necessary to fulfil an Occupational Therapist's (OT) recommendations made under the Disabled Facilities Grant legislation.

Approved grant-aid will include all works to a property which will fulfil an OT's recommendations. This may include, but is not limited to, car hard standing, providing access ramps, accommodating construction access restrictions, widening doorways and fitting wider external and internal doors to accommodate a wheelchair user.

There is no standard amount of grant-aid awarded for a double-storey disability extension.

**6. Has the Housing Executive requested additional grant from the Department for Communities due to the rising costs in construction and building materials.**

In recognition of increasing construction costs, Housing Executive applied a 12% increase to Disabled Facility Grant rates during the financial year 2022/23.

The Housing Executive has not requested further additional funding from the Department for Communities. There is sufficient scope within its existing 2022/23 budget allocation to cover this extra cost.

**7. If the Housing Executive has requested additional grant from the Department for disability adaptations for private homeowners, what increase will be made to homeowners to cover the costs for single storey disability extensions and for double storey extensions.**

The well documented challenges which have affected and continue to effect the construction industry, regarding contractor capacity is impacting grant-aid works with increased costs for labour and materials.

To help alleviate this since June 2020, the Schedule of Rates for Grant-Aided Works have been reviewed and uplifted by 32.682% overall in a series of three individual uplift reviews.

The first at 8.5% was June 2020, the second September 2021 when an increase of 12.197% was applied to rates and most recently from 4 August 2022 when 12% was applied to help customers and their chosen contractor to complete the necessary works.

The uplifts are calculated using the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Building Cost Information Service Cost Indices (RICS BCIS Indices). These indices are obtained

using contemporaneous cost information from live GB and N. Ireland Construction projects, Building Materials Suppliers, Construction Professionals, etc. They represent the fairest and most transparent manner of applying the appropriate uplift percentages to the rates in the Private Sector Improvement Services (PSIS) List of Grant-Aided Works.

Whilst the Housing Executive has not requested further additional monies from the Department, we would highlight the below.

Article 2 of *The Housing Renovation etc. Grants (Grant Limit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2003* informs the Housing Executive of the maximum grant-aid amount which we can pay. The regulations allow £25,000 for a Disabled Facilities Grant. However, there is provision for up to an additional £25,000 depending on the eligible works required. The Order is clear that the total amount of grant-aid awarded for a Disabled Facilities Grant must not exceed £50,000.

With the recent well documented increase in construction costs, the Department for Communities and Department of Finance agreed a revised maximum grant of £70,000. But to permanently enact this increase a change in secondary legislation is required, which will take some time. However, the Housing Executive has put in place a mechanism to ensure good governance as they manage public funding limits which are over and above the legislative amount.

Currently awards must not exceed £70,000 but this uplift was not put in place until end July 2022; before then the maximum grant-aid award was £50,000.

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