

**Please ask for:** Mrs. J. Hunt

**Extension No:** 4623

**E-Mail:** [joannahunt@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:joannahunt@cannockchasedc.gov.uk)

24 February, 2020

Dear Councillor,

**WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
4:00 PM., TUESDAY 3 MARCH, 2020  
ESPERANCE ROOM, CIVIC CENTRE, CANNOCK**

You are invited to attend this meeting for consideration of the matters itemised in the following Agenda.

Yours sincerely,



**T. McGovern,  
Managing Director**

To: Councillors:

Freeman, Miss. M.A. (Chairman)  
Jones, Mrs. V. (Vice-Chairman)

Buttery, M.S.	Newbury, J.A.A.
Cartwright, Mrs. S.M.	Smith, C.D.
Crabtree, S.K.	Stretton, Mrs. P.Z.
Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Sutton, Mrs. H.M.
Dunnett, Ms. A.J.	Todd, Mrs. D.M.
Layton, Mrs. A.	

Independent Co-optee:

- Simmy Akhtar, Healthwatch Staffordshire

Staffordshire County Council Appointee for the purposes of the Committee's Statutory Functions under the Health and Social Care Act 2001:

- County Councillor P.M. Hewitt

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# AGENDA

## PART 1

### 1. Apologies

### 2. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

(i) To declare any personal, pecuniary or disclosable pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct and any possible contraventions under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(ii) To receive any Party Whip declarations.

### 3. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November, 2019 (enclosed).

### 4. Notes

To receive the Notes of the meetings of the Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee – Task and Finish Group held on 29 October and 19 November, 2019 for information (enclosed).

### 5. Update – Healthwatch Staffordshire

To receive an update on the current work undertaken by Healthwatch Staffordshire.

### 6. Update – Staffordshire County Council’s Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee

To receive an update from the Chairman on the recent meeting(s) of the Staffordshire County Council’s Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee.

### 7. Cannock Chase Council Housing Assistance Policy - Final Report From The Housing Assistance Policy Task & Finish Working Group

To receive a briefing note of the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles regarding the revised Housing Assistance Policy (Item 4.1 – 4.8 plus 2 appendices).

### 8. Quarter 3 2019-20 Priority Delivery Plan update – Improving Community Wellbeing – Health, Culture and Sport

To receive the latest performance information (Item 5.1 – 5.4).

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER, 2019 AT 4.00 P.M.**  
**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**  
**PART 1**

PRESENT: Councillors:

Freeman, Miss. M.A.(Chairman)

Jones, Mrs. V. (Chairman)

Buttery, M.S.

Newbury, J.A.A.

Cartwright, Mrs. S.M.

Smith, C.D.

Crabtree, S.K.

Stretton, Mrs. P.Z.

Davis, Mrs. M.A.

Sutton, Mrs. H.M.

Dunnett, Ms. A.J.

Todd, Mrs. D.M.

Layton, Mrs. A.

Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles: Lisa Shephard and George Gaye.

**10. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Independent Co-opted Member Jackie Owen, Healthwatch and Staffordshire County Council appointee County Councillor P.M. Hewitt.

**11. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members and Party Whip Declarations**

No declarations of interests in additions to those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members Interests were made.

**12. Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July, 2019 be approved as a correct record.

**13. Notes**

The Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles reported that a Working Group had been established to consider and determine a number of possible work programme options. The Group met on 9 September, 2019 and it was agreed that the areas for consideration as part of the work programme would be the Council's current Policy in respect of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and the uptake of

sports facilities. This would feed into the work currently being undertaken by IHL in respect of GP referrals.

The Notes of the Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Working Group held on 9 September, 2019 were received for information.

#### **14. Update – Healthwatch Staffordshire**

The Chairman and Members thanked Jackie Owen for the work she had produced for the Committee and wished her well with her retirement.

The Chairman reported that Jackie Owen would not be attending the meeting today due to a prior arrangement, however she had provided the following report:

##### **“Healthwatch projects update.**

Young People Emotional Health Service. Healthwatch undertook a study of emotional health services for young people in schools. The report is now published on our website [www.healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk) The main findings from the report were that almost without exception resources for these low level support services in schools have been cut, whilst the demand has increased in line with national trends. There were a number of areas that young people talked about in terms of what would help them deal with issues that caused stress and anxiety and these were included in our recommendations to the CCG and to schools. Since the publication of our report, there have been new developments in services in schools. MPFT have secured funding to provide a low-level support service in 30 schools across Staffordshire. In addition, the County Council has published their mental health strategy for the development of low-level services for young people which includes the provision of many of the services outlined in our recommendations.

##### **Discharge to Assess (D2A)**

As part of our D2A project, Healthwatch interviewed over 100 patients at our 3 acute hospitals and 3 community hospitals about their experience of the process of discharge from hospital under the D2A banner. The overwhelming message that came out of this work was the lack of understanding of what D2A was from a patient perspective and also the almost total lack of communication from ward staff with patients about what was happening to them. To most this was a process that was 'done to ' rather than with, including patient's or their families and most of the people we spoke to had no idea what was happening to them. We also spoke to a significant number of staff who also expressed varying degrees of understanding and commitment to the values and benefit of D2A.

At the same time that we were undertaking this work, the CCG were also looking at how D2A was working in practice and found as Healthwatch did, that lack of communication was a significant barrier in the effective delivery of the service. Our work was triangulated with the CCG work and added value by focusing on the patient experience. This work has influenced the review of the service by the CCG and local authority and has also been shared with the acute trusts who have responded with their learning points and actions resulting from the report.

## **Current Work Programme**

Healthwatch are currently engaged in a piece of work with 4 of the South Staffordshire CCG's to look at Patient experience of Care Navigation. This is where patients who ring their GP practice for an appointment are signposted to other professional or services inside or external to the practice. The purpose of this work is to help the CCG and practices to improve the way practices help patient's to see the most appropriate health or care professional and make best use of the resources available as well as cutting waiting times for those who really need to see a GP. As part of our work we have developed an online survey to complete and also intend to visit 26 GP practices across the area including 6 in Cannock / Rugeley to speak to patients face to face and gather their views. If you have contacted your GP practice for an appointment over the past 12 months, we would like to hear your views by clicking on the link below. This work is taking place over November with a report due to the CCG by mid-December.

## **Use of assistive technology as a solution to care needs in the home**

This is a project Healthwatch are involved with at the request of the local authority who are working with Capita to look at digital care solutions to help address the financial and workforce pressures of delivering care in the future. The purpose of the work is to establish people's attitudes to assistive technology and the use of this to provide care solutions for people being supported to live in their own homes. The Council are keen to know what technology people might use, what are the barriers that would prevent them using technology and what would incentivise them to use it as opposed to having people visit them in their own homes. Healthwatch have identified and arranged 3 focus groups for Capita to undertake this work with different needs. A carers group, a group of people with long term conditions and a group of over 65's who are currently fit and healthy. The results of the work will enable the local authority to determine how best to encourage people to consider alternative solutions to direct care provision in the future. This work is taking place throughout November.

## **Access to social care assessment and services**

Healthwatch has received feedback from members of the public about the length of time people are having to wait for an assessment for social care services and then for services once assessed as meeting eligibility criteria. We are working on a project to find out people's experience of the assessment process and gaining access to services and for those assessed as not meeting eligibility criteria what alternatives are offered. The local authority is fully supportive of Healthwatch undertaking this work and have allocated a Commissioning Manager to work closely with us, providing information on waiting times for assessment and what information is given to people whilst they wait and when they dont meet eligibility criteria. This project will plan to report in April 2020.

## **Other issues**

We have been closely involved with the re-contracting of the Autism Service in

South Staffordshire following the relinquishing of the contract by Midland Psychology. We have worked closely with families of Children with Autism or those awaiting diagnosis and have gathered feedback which has been reported to the CCG, CQC and NHS England. The contract has been placed temporarily with Midlands Foundation Partnership Trust (MPFT) whilst the procurement process is undertaken and the service re-commissioned in April 2020.

This July at our AGM we had the Managing Director of South Staffordshire CCG talking about the NHS long term plan and what this would mean for local communities. We also had the Chief Executive Officer of MPFT who spoke about services provided and the ambitions for the future. This provided the 65 attendees the opportunity to share their experiences and ask questions of the decision makers and have a say in how they wanted services to be shaped and developed across Staffordshire for the future.

In the last quarter July – September we have;

- engaged with 1620 people across Staffordshire
- 199 people have given feedback about services
- 236 have been provided with information and advice about services
- 83 people have been signposted to services
- 500 people received our latest newsletter
- our volunteers have carried out 274 hours of volunteering”.

## **15. Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles**

Members welcomed Lisa Shepard and George Gaye of Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles who gave the following presentation on the work undertaken in the community particularly in relation to GP referrals.

### **Infrastructure**

- Integration of ‘Activity Referral’ into the Wellbeing team
- Cross marketing amongst the Wellbeing team (sports / creativity & arts / outdoor)
  - Chase Fit - walking / cycling / gardening / running
  - Chase Up – place based - social green exercise
  - Well Active – Young people & adult with disabilities
  - Grow Up Great – Families 0 -11yrs
- Improved knowledge of service amongst membership advisors at LC’s
- New and widening of adult offers – (EG - Young at Heart / Chase Fit)
- Social Prescribing Offers
- Health professional relationships

### **Marketing**

- Co-design marketing with GP’s (own identity)
- Rebranding
- Empower residents to request GP referral
- Empower partners to give out referral cards
- Community Events
- Protected Learning Time - showcases
- Patient Participation Groups
- Hosting PLT events

- Tours of services

### **Pathway of Participation**

- Piloting Cannock South PCN – *integration of Social Prescribing and Activity Referral on one form*
- Improved the resident navigation of opportunities
- Increased choice and range to aid retention
- Developing co-designed offers
- Increased clinical pathways:
- Identified hand held gaps
  - Everyone Active/Health
  - End of clinical service
  - Inclusion post
  - Across Wellbeing team
  - Public / Partner Power - ask health professionals
  - New health partners – maternity

### **Recommendations/Ideas**

Acknowledge the important role all Cllrs play in collaborations to develop new opportunities for residents

No formal partnership agreement or Memorandum of Understanding with CCG – could there be?

- Referral pathway / marketing / event showcasing etc

Influence Primary Care Networks

- Social Prescribing
- Basing ourselves in 'hot spot' surgeries
- Cllrs supplied with referral figures for the PCN's/ PPG's they represent to assist 'nudging'

Contract renewal?

Stronger partnership marketing/social media campaign across key strategic partners into the service(s)

Members of the Committee also watched a short video which detailed how the GP referral scheme had helped members of the community.

Slides were then shown which provided statistics on referrals between January-December and the conversion rates of membership.

Information was also provided which showed that Cannock Chase had seen a decrease in inactivity by 7% from the previous year.

Members were invited to ask questions.

The Chairman reported that the presentation was positive and advised that the Chair of the Cannock Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) would be invited to attend a meeting of the Committee in January.

She reported that she currently attends meetings of the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee at the County Council and CCG meetings where signposting of services had been discussed. However this was something that could be

addressed with the Chair of the CCG when he attends the meeting to be scheduled in January.

A Member was keen to know how many people stayed on with IHL following the referral process and the initial 12 week course.

George Gaye responded and advised that approximately 70% of people completed the 12 week course following a referral, however certain factors that could influence their attendance could depend on the nature of the health condition they may have. However, at the 12 month stage members would be provided with a set of questions using IPAC to determine and make an assessment on the overall health and wellbeing of the person.

A Member of the Committee commented on the good work being undertaken by IHL and thought that something more formal with the CCG would work well.

A Member referred to the presentation and was keen to know what health related activities were available through IHL for older members of the community that were isolated.

Lisa Shephard explained that information on Falls Prevention was available through Staffs County Council and indicated that work was being undertaken in respect of mental health wellbeing. However, it would not be an easy process trying to convince older people to use the leisure centre; therefore something like the 'Chase It' scheme could help.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from IHL for their presentation.

## **16. Update – Disabled Facilities Grants**

The Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles reported that a Task and Finish Group had been arranged for Members to consider the Policy on DFGs and Housing Assistance. The Group met on 29 October, 2019 and received a presentation on the Council's current Policy. The Group was tasked with conducting some research on neighbouring Authorities with a view to a further meeting where some recommendations could be made. The recommendations would then come forward to the Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee followed by Cabinet, hopefully for approval.

It was agreed that a further meeting of the Task and Finish Group be scheduled for Tuesday 19 November, 2019 at 3.00 pm. The Council's current Policy and presentation would be circulated to all Members on the Committee for information.

## **17. Update – Staffordshire County Council's Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee**

The Chairman discussed the Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust presentation which employed over 8000 people and had a budget in excess of £400m. She reported that the presentation focussed upon a number of areas including contracts that had provision of military health services, specialist drug and alcohol services and healthcare in prisons.



She also reported on the Maternity, Children and Young Person Programme and touched on emotional and mental health. It appeared that maternity levels at the County Hospital, Stafford were very low and mortality rates for the Cannock area were high. The reason was unknown but the Committee had requested further information.

All information in respect of the meetings of the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee was available on Staffordshire County Council's website.

(Councillor M.S. Buttery left the meeting at 5.09 p.m.).

**18. Quarter 2 2019-20 Improving Community Wellbeing (Health, Culture and Sport) Priority Delivery Plan Update**

Consideration was given to the Quarter 2 2019-20 Improving Community Wellbeing (Health, Culture and Sport) Priority Delivery Plan Update (Item 10.1 – 10.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles gave an update to Members with regards to the Quarter 2 2019-20 Improving Community Wellbeing (Health, Culture and Sport) Priority Delivery Plan Update.

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CHAIRMAN

The meeting closed at 5.15 pm

## CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

### NOTES OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP – WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 29 OCTOBER, 2019 AT 4.00 P.M.

Present: Councillor Ms. M. Freeman (Chairman of Wellbeing Scrutiny  
Committee)  
Councillor C.D. Smith  
Councillor Ms. V. Jones

Officers: M. Edmonds, Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles  
D. Prosser-Davies, Food, Safety and Licensing Manager  
M. Walker, Environmental Protection Manager  
T. Weston, Senior Environmental Health Officer  
J. Hunt, Senior Committee Officer

Apologies: Councillor Mrs. H.M. Sutton  
Councillor Mrs. D.M. Todd  
Councillor J. Newbury

A presentation was given by Officers which covered the following:

#### Purpose and Scope of Review

- look at the current policy and examine any problems with the existing system and processes
- identify any opportunities to develop a more efficient and effective service for the Council's residents needing disabled adaptations; and
- make suggested amendments to the policy to improve its effectiveness and enable those with disabilities to regain independence faster

#### Comments/Questions

The Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles commented that it was hoped that the Policy could be reviewed and improved and then submitted to Cabinet.

#### Legislation

- **Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996** – Governs Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and explicitly Mandatory DFGs
- **The Housing Renewal Grants (Services and Charges) Order 1996** – includes what DFGs can be used to pay for
- **Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002** – Provides flexibility and opportunities for LAs to address housing issues provided a policy for housing assistance is in place

#### Comments/Questions

In response to a question, the Environmental Protection Manager discussed the Regulatory Reform and the flexibility for the Council. The Council's Housing Assistance Policy which previously went to Cabinet provided some discretion dependent upon what was needed.

- What is a DFG and Why is it needed

**What is a DFG?**

- Mandatory grant to help older and disabled people in owner occupied, privately rented and registered provider properties to make changes to their home environment so that they can continue to live safely and independently.

**Why is it needed?**

- Ageing population
- Poorly designed housing for disabled people (including children) and those that are getting frailer with age
- To reduce hospital admissions and providing safer and more effective discharge

Comments/Questions

The Environmental Protection Manager commented that there was a separate Policy for Council owned dwellings and this Policy was aimed at providing greater discretion for the Council.

The Senior Environmental Health Officer also touched on the allowances for being 'means tested' which had not changed for a number of years.

- Slide 1 - Current process, funding, policy and performance

**Current Process**

- Eligibility, Assessment of need and Application – Occupational Therapists make assessment
- Test of Resources
- Cost, design and specify works
- Monitor works and sign off

**Current Funding**

- 2019-20 - £926,470 –funding which potentially is not being fully used

- Slide 2 - Current Policy

- Cabinet 16 March 2017
- Review every 3 years
- Discretion to make individual decisions outside policy for
  - Unforeseen works above the mandatory grant limit
  - Discretionary top up to £45k
  - Non mandatory works referred by welfare authority
  - Relocation grants
  - Works that reduce health risks to persons with a confirmed medical condition and where there is no owner/landlord responsibility

Comments/Questions

Members discussed the equipment installed in properties and the process for removal when no longer required, the grant and maintenance costs.

The Environmental Protection Manager advised Members that the grant did not cover maintenance or service contracts, however extended warranties would be provided for equipment such as track hoists and stairlifts.

- Slide 3 – showed the current policy

#### Comments/Questions

Members discussed the relocation grant and it was confirmed that this was solely for the use of assisting and providing equipment (with no cap on the limit) and not for the purchase of property.

Officers then discussed with Members the various aspects of the assistance available.

- Slide 4 – showed information on the current performance

#### Comments/Questions

The Senior Environmental Health Officer provided information to Members around the change in days from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2. She advised that legally the Council could take up to 6 months from receipt of application to approval.

The Environmental Protection Manager explained that the process for DFGs which had previously been delivered by the Home Improvement Agency had come to an end due to ongoing problems. Whilst there was a small amount of risk with this, it also left the Council in greater control.

He also explained that whilst the backlog of applications had been cleared, demand had fallen and the Council were experiencing a drop out rate.

A Member referred to the Policy and asked if it was restricted to mobility only and if those that were visually impaired could also apply. He felt that those that were visually impaired were overlooked and that there was the perception that only those with mobility problems could apply.

In response to the question, the Senior Environmental Health Officer advised that an Occupational Therapist would make an assessment to the needs of the individual; however she commented that the needs of people were continually changing and in particular it was emerging that more people were living with dementia. Therefore it was important to keep up to date with ideas.

#### Current problems

##### Problems and Aims

- Complex and Bureaucratic – Reduce Administration
- Restrictive – Broaden scope of assistance and works undertaken
- Time consuming – Speed up the process
- Low take-up – Increase take up

- Charging regime – Formalise charging process

The Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles referred to the low take of the grant and indicated that the problems experienced with the drop out rate could be due to the applicant having to declare their financial status. If the applicant through the process was found to have disposable income, they could be liable to make a contribution towards the equipment.

The Chairman commented and explained that many constituents would refuse to apply due to the process for means testing.

Members were advised that the Council currently made a charge for administration which would come directly out of the grant. The charge was significantly less than the County Council which was estimated to be around 16%.

The Chairman then discussed with Members how the Council could promote the DFG scheme to the public.

#### Next steps

- Task and Finish Group
- To research other Council's DFG procedures and Housing Assistance Policies to identify improvements for inclusion in the revised policy.
- To look at other Council's charges for administering DFGs

The Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles explained that Members of the Group would be asked to conduct some research on other LAs that provided similar assistance to their communities and a further meeting would be arranged to look at ideas.

It was agreed that a further meeting be arranged in approximately 3 weeks in order to evaluate the ideas from Members and incorporate into the Council's current Policy.

Close 4.55 p.m.

## **CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**

### **NOTES OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP – WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 19 NOVEMBER, 2019 AT 3.00 P.M.**

Present: Councillor Ms. M. Freeman (Chairman of Wellbeing Scrutiny  
Committee)  
Councillor C.D. Smith  
Councillor Ms. V. Jones  
Councillor Mrs. H. Sutton  
Councillor Mrs. D. Todd  
Councillor J. Newbury  
Councillor Ms. A. Layton

Officers: M. Edmonds, Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles  
M. Walker, Environmental Health Consultant  
T. Weston, Senior Environmental Health Officer  
J. Hunt, Senior Committee Officer

#### **Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

All Members present.

#### **Notes – 29 October, 2019**

Received for information.

#### **Members Research and discussion on areas of the current Policy where improvements have been identified for inclusion in the revised Policy**

The Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles explained the scope and review of the last session and advised that the revised Policy would be taken through the Cabinet process for approval.

A Member referred to a document entitled 'Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and Other Adaptations – External Review' produced by UWE Bristol which she thought provided some interesting information around DFGs and disabled adaptations. She felt that there was some good practice around the use of flow charts and the easier language used. She commented that the Council's Policy could be improved by following this as an example.

A Member agreed that the wording of the Council's current Policy could flow better and be improved. He also referred to the title of the Policy and commented that the word 'accessibility' should be incorporated. He referred to the 'Naidex' exhibition being held next year which showcased innovations in mobility, care and other areas which he considered would be useful for Members to attend.

Members reported that they had experienced some difficulties trying to ascertain information on DFGs from other Local Authorities. However, a Member commented that she had managed to locate Lichfield Council's Policy; however others such as Stafford Borough Council and South Staffs needed to be updated.

It was explained that the Council had difficulty with the drop out rate for DFG applications. The process from receipt of application to installation of equipment was explained to Members. Members were advised that the application would initially be forwarded to the Benefits department who would check to see if the applicant was entitled to the grant, if not, it would then go through a means test process. This was usually where the drop out occurred which could be due to reasons such as difficulty with form filling, not having the means to pay a contribution or not wishing to disclose personal finances.

Officers then provided information to Members on means testing and affordability, design of the scheme and cost of work and re-assessment of an applicant should their financial status change.

The Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles indicated that some minor adaptations and installation of alarms etc. up to a certain amount could all be considered, with the aim of assisting speedier discharges from hospital..

The Senior Environmental Health Officer also commented that there could be instances where a carer was required to live in and provide care in the home of a resident. There could be an issue where the property was either not adequately sized or could not be adapted to meet those needs. Therefore, the Policy could consider an extension of a bedroom or perhaps re-location to meet the need. However, there would be certain constraints to this. She also touched on the lack of provision for older people who may require respite care whilst adaptations were being carried out to their property.

A Member referred to and asked that the 'Accessible Property Register' be explored. The register could be accessed through the internet and provided a list of properties in various locations for sale or rent that were wheelchair accessible. The Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles was not aware of this register but would explore it.

The Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles summarised the next steps for officers:

- To look at the document produced by UWE Bristol
- To re-draft the Housing Assistance Policy and incorporate where possible, options discussed by Members including means testing levels and criteria
- Review Passported Benefits
- The types of assistance to be provided e.g. dementia aids, falls and trip alarms, moving assistance,
- Help to accelerate hospital discharges and prevent hospital admissions and re-admissions,
- Help to provide living accommodation for carers and respite care for people in lieu of pending adaptations, and

- Opportunities for the better promotion of the grants available

The Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles also asked Members to send any other comments or suggested improvements through to Democratic Services

He also advised that a further meeting of the Task and Finish Group would be required prior to the Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 3 March, 2019.

Close 5.59 p.m.



<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Head of Environment &amp; Healthy Lifestyles</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Mike Edmonds</b>
<b>Telephone No:</b>	<b>4416</b>
<b>Portfolio Leaders:</b>	<b>Health Portfolio Leader and Environment Portfolio Leader</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Report Track:</b>	<b>Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee</b>

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 MARCH 2020

### FINAL REPORT FROM THE HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP

#### 1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present to the Scrutiny Committee the final report of the Housing Assistance Policy Task & Finish Working Group and the revised Housing Assistance Policy – Independent Living.

#### 2 Recommendations

That the Health and Wellbeing Committee

- 2.1 note the work of the Task and Finish Working Group;
- 2.2 consider the report and the revised Housing Assistance Policy – Independent Living. (Appendix 2); and
- 2.3 determine and agree one of the options set out in paragraph 5.21 of this report.

#### 3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Council's current Discretionary Housing Assistance Policy approved by Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017 is nearly 3 years old and due for review. (Appendix 1)
- 3.2 This review provides the opportunity for the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to propose a number of wide ranging, flexible options to broaden the Council's ability to provide discretionary financial assistance to improve the quality of life for disabled residents in need of an adaptation to their home,

including opportunities to undertake preventative measures, to reduce hospital admissions and demand for social care and remove housing related obstacles preventing discharge.

- 3.3 In order to offer wider assistance the local housing authority must adopt a policy which explains how the authority will use its powers. This policy must be notified to the public and a copy made available at the Council offices.

#### **4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 This policy supports the Council's Strategic priorities Community Wellbeing and Prosperity by of increasing and improving housing choice, sustaining safe and secure communities and supporting the elderly and vulnerable.

#### **5 Report Detail**

##### **Background**

- 5.1 At its meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019, the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Task and Finish Working Group to review the Council's Discretionary Housing Assistance Policy approved by Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017.
- 5.2 More specifically, the review was to:
- (a) look at the current policy and examine any problems with the existing system and processes;
  - (b) identify any opportunities to develop a more efficient and effective service for the Council's more vulnerable, elderly and disabled residents who need adaptations to be made in order for them to live independently, safely, confidently and with dignity in their own homes, for longer; and
  - (c) make suggested amendments to the policy to improve its effectiveness and enable those with disabilities to regain their independence faster.
- 5.3 The Task and Finish Working Group comprised the following Members:
- |                                    |                          |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Councillor Maureen Freeman (Chair) | Councillor Josh Newbury  |
| Councillor Diane Todd              | Councillor Andrea Layton |
| Councillor Valerie Jones           | Councillor Hyra Sutton   |
| Councillor Doug Smith              |                          |

##### **Legal Context**

- 5.4 Cannock Chase Council, in its role as a local housing authority, has a statutory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs) to qualifying applicants under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

- 5.5 In addition, to providing mandatory DFGs, the Council has the power to offer discretionary financial assistance by virtue of the Regulatory Reform (housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.

**Financial Context**

- 5.6 The Council's Disabled Facilities Grant allocation for 2019-20 from Staffordshire County Council in respect of the District's entitlement from the Better Care Fund is £926,471.

**Task & Finish Working Group**

**Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

- 5.7 At the first meeting of the Working Group on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019 Members received a presentation from Environmental Health Officers (Private Sector Housing).
- 5.8 The presentation covered the legal context, types of Disabled Facilities Grant, current processes, funding, policy, performance and the current problems.
- 5.9 Members were made aware that the DFG process could be complex, time consuming and bureaucratic, particularly with regards to the administration of the scheme and the means testing requirements. As such, Members were informed that this can lead to delays in processing applications and result in abortive and withdrawn applications.
- 5.10 Members were advised that the contribution a disabled applicant has to make towards an adaptation is determined by a prescribed means test, based on what the Government considers a person needs to live on per week, their income together with that of their partner, and how much they could fund through a commercial bank loan. In reality, many applicants are disabled and elderly and so are not able to access most loans.
- 5.11 In addition, because the means test does not take account of actual living costs; those applicants with high mortgages, or rent payments are hugely affected and unable to raise the funding required. As result, many applicants who do not have any available funds have a large contribution to make or do not qualify for a DFG.
- 5.12 Administration of the means test is time consuming for both the Council and the applicant, who has to produce evidence of their income (bank statements, benefit entitlements, wage slips and pension details) which is then used to calculate their contribution. This causes delays in the process and can lead to applicants withdrawing or aborting their claim.
- 5.13 Members were keen to ensure that any policy changes should provide greater flexibility for discretionary assistance and wherever possible the process was made simpler and easier for the most vulnerable applicants. Members of the Working Group agreed to research other current policies and examples of best practice in order to shape any future policy changes.

## Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019

- 5.14 At the second meeting of the Working Group held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019, Members reported back on their findings from looking at other policies and examples of good practice.
- 5.15 It was agreed by the Working Group that officers should draft a revised policy that provides more flexibility and discretion in the allocation and delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants. This would, thereby reducing the time taken to process applications and eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy; so that residents have greater access to home adaptations to enable them to live in their own homes safely and independently.
- 5.16 In particular, officers were requested to look at policy changes that supported wider social care outcomes enabling additional works to be funded that support independent living, hospital discharge and health and safety issues where prevention is key.
- 5.17 Officers were requested to look at new forms of financial assistance including:
- Hospital Prevention and Discharge Assistance
  - Dementia Friendly Assistance
  - Carer Support Assistance
  - Assistive Technology Assistance
  - Discounting Applicant's contributions
- 5.18 Members also requested that officers promote the grants available to residents in a more targeted, clear and concise manner, should the revised policy be approved by the Council.
- 5.19 The table below summarises the changes included in the proposed Policy attached as Appendix 2:

Description	New /Existing/ Amended	Funding	Means Test	Land Charge	Objective
DFG (Mandatory Assistance)	Existing	£30,000	Y except where a child or on passported benefits	For cost over £5,000 Max charge £10,000 Duration 10 years	Adaptation of the home in accordance with the criteria in the Housing (Grants, Construction and Regeneration) Act 1996
Discretionary Assistance - Top- up grant	Amended	£20,000	As above	Y Full amount of grant	Provide for cost of the adaptation scheme where works exceed the Mandatory £30,000 limit

<b>ITEM NO. 4.5</b>
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Description	New /Existing/ Amended	Funding	Means Test	Land Charge	Objective
Discretionary Hospital Prevention and Discharge Assistance	New	£12,000	N	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Minor adaptations and other works designed to prevent admission to hospital, care or nursing home or assist with speedy discharge from hospital
Discretionary Dementia Friendly - Dementia Cognitive and Behavioural conditions Adaptations Grant	New	£10,000	N	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Adaptations to assist the person diagnosed with dementia or cognitive/behavioural conditions to manage their surroundings and retain their independence.
Discretionary Relocation Grant	Amended	£7,000	Y except where a child or on passported benefits	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	To meet the reasonable costs associated with moving where the existing home is not suitable for adaptations
Discretionary Carer support assistance	New	£15,000	Y except where a child or on passported benefits	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Provision of appropriate accommodation for a carer where required to provide 24/7 care.
Discretionary OT Assessment assistance	New	£200	N	N	Provision of Occupational Therapy report where an organisation/charity is to fund adaptation scheme
Discretionary Assistive technology assistance	New	£3,000	Y	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Supports a technology based approach to keeping people safe and well in their homes. eg

Description	New /Existing/ Amended	Funding	Means Test	Land Charge	Objective
					life line, fall detectors, key safes – for purchasing equipment and monthly fee to connect with call centre (if required)

**Other measures**

Extended warranties: 3 years	New	As appropriate	Included in grant	As per grant	For all adaptations which require electrical installations such as through-floor lifts, step lifts, stair lifts, closomats etc.
Local Council Tax Reduction to be considered a DFG passport benefit	New	Not applicable	N	Not applicable	Anticipated to help people in sole receipt of this benefit to access necessary adaptations.
Discounting of first £5000 of applicants contribution following means testing	New	£5,000	Y	N	Anticipated to help people who are obliged to make a significant or unaffordable contribution to the adaptations required.

**Options available to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee**

- 5.20 The Council does not have to offer discretionary financial assistance, but failure to do so could leave vulnerable people at risk of avoidable harm. The current increase in the levels of Better Care Funding is best used to support the aims of the BCF.
- 5.21 In summary, the Committee can either:
- (a) endorse the final report and the revised Housing Assistance Policy and supports a recommendation for Cabinet to approve and adopt the revised policy;

- (b) amend the final report and the Housing Assistance Policy and supports a recommendation for Cabinet to approve and adopt the amended policy; or
- (c) reject the final report and the Housing Assistance Policy and propose another way forward.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

- 6.1.1 Grants and assistance to individuals as outlined in this report will be provided only up to the limit of the total DFG grants received by the Council. As such, there will be no direct financial impact on the Council's other financial resources.

### **6.2 Legal**

- 6.2.1 The Council must adopt a policy for discretionary housing assistance before it can utilise its powers under the Regulatory Reform (housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 as amended in 2008.
- 6.2.2 The proposals support the requirements of the Care Act 2014 which requires local authorities to deliver services built around and individual's need in order to promote wellbeing and, where possible, support independent living.

### **6.3 Human Resources**

None

### **6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)**

None

### **6.5 Human Rights Act**

None

### **6.6 Data Protection**

None

### **6.7 Risk Management**

- 6.7.1 There are no identified major risks associated with the revised policy. Not having a policy could mean that the Council would be unable to utilise the Better Care Fund for anything other than mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant. Any financial assistance in excess of mandatory disabled facilities grant is discretionary and will be reduced/ceased subject to funding.

### **6.8 Equality & Diversity**

- 6.8.1 The revised Housing Assistance Policy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. The proposed changes to the policy will have a positive impact on

elderly, disabled and more vulnerable people, with no negative impact on any person with a protected characteristic.

#### 6.9 **Best Value**

This Policy seeks to achieve best consideration in the administration of mandatory and discretionary assistance.

### **7 Appendices to the Report**

Appendix 1	Housing Assistance Policy March 2017
Appendix 2	Mandatory DFG and Housing Assistance Policy – Independent Living

#### **Previous Consideration**

None

#### **Background Papers**

**Cabinet Report - Delivery of Disabled Adaptations and Policy for Discretionary Housing Assistance 16 March 2017**



**Cannock Chase District Council**

**Housing Assistance Policy**

**March 2017**

This policy describes discretionary assistance available to residents across the Cannock Chase District to enable them to occupy a safer or healthier home, to reduce time spent in hospital/care and to promote independence. It has been developed as a result of changes to the funding mechanism for Disabled Facilities Grants (Better Care Fund) and in response to enhanced budgets. It will require review as budget information emerges. It will take immediate effect once approved.

All requests for assistance are subject to the discretion of the authorised officer and budget availability.

All assistance will be subject to the mandatory means test in force at that time and will require an application in accordance with the applicable disabled facilities grant legislation.

All quotes for assistance will be assessed for value for money. Quotes which are considered excessive will be rejected or approved at the value considered reasonable

All assistance will include a requirement that the monetary value of the assistance is repaid upon transfer of ownership and will be registered as a charge on the property. This requirement will be limited to 10 years from final payment at which point any charge will be removed.

**Maintenance and Servicing**

The grant available will not extend to the provision of maintenance and servicing contracts for any equipment installed at a property. The applicant will be responsible for ensuring that all such equipment provided is properly serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and at the recommended intervals.

All applications are subject to property owner's written agreement.

### **Types of assistance available**

1. Discretion to make individual decisions on any case that falls outside of policy.
2. Unforeseen works to complete a scheme that take an approval above the mandatory grant limit.
3. Discretionary top up to a limit of £45,000 for mandatory works on a mandatory DFG.
4. Discretion to offer grant for non mandatory works upon referral of the welfare authority.
5. Relocation grants to include reasonable sale fees, legal costs, removal costs etc. (not capital or stamp duty) plus a DFG on the basis that the overall package provides a better solution than adapting current home. The new home must be within Cannock Chase Council area.
6. Works that reduce safety or health risks to persons with a confirmed & associated medical condition and where there is no owner/landlord responsibility.

### **Review Arrangements**

The Council will monitor the effectiveness of the Policy in promoting the independence of residents and will conduct reviews as and when appropriate, and at least every 3 years.

The Council will consider changes in the Policy in the light of new legislation and developments affecting the local area and will consult with stakeholders at the time it is considering such changes. Any revision of the Policy will be published as soon as possible thereafter.

# CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY

This policy document sets out the way in which Cannock Chase District Council will provide both mandatory and discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs) for private sector residential adaptations.

*INDEPENDENT  
LIVING -2020*

# 1. Introduction

Cannock Chase District Council, in its role as a local housing authority, has a statutory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to qualifying applicants under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

In addition to providing mandatory DFGs, the Council has the power to offer discretionary financial assistance by virtue of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.

This policy document sets out the way in which Cannock Chase District Council will provide both mandatory and discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs) for private sector residential adaptations.

This document contains information on eligibility criteria for grant assistance, conditions relating to applications, approval and payment of grant and other relevant conditions and requirements.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to enable the Council to provide more flexibility and discretion in the allocation and delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grants, thereby providing residents of the District greater access to home adaptations, in order to support people living safely, independently, confidently and with dignity in their own homes for as long as possible.

## 3. Policy Statement

Cannock Chase District Council is committed to ensuring that all eligible Disabled Facilities Grants applicants receive the appropriate home adaptation to meet their needs.

Where residents have a disability we will work with them and other agencies to arrange adaptations or provide advice about moving to a more suitable home.

## 4. National Context

Cannock Chase District Council, in its role as a local housing authority, has a statutory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to qualifying applicants under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 gave councils the power to provide financial assistance for home repairs, adaptations and other improvements to reflect local needs, conditions and resources.

The assistance provided under this Policy is subject to individual terms and conditions, including a requirement to contribute or repay some or all of the assistance in certain circumstances.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 there was a significant change in the way that national government funding for the provision of home adaptations grants (DFGs) is paid to local authorities. Instead of making a direct payment to the local housing authority (Cannock Chase District Council) to meet the cost of providing DFGs, the allocation of the funds is now made through the Better Care Fund managed by Staffordshire County Council.

However the statutory duty to deliver DFGs for residents of this district remains with Cannock Chase District Council.

## 5. Local Context

Cannock Chase Council is ranked overall as the 126<sup>th</sup><sup>1</sup> most deprived local authority district in England where 1 is the most deprived and 317 the least deprived. Cannock Chase is also ranked 13<sup>th</sup> most deprived in the Region.

The IoD 2019 ranks Cannock Chase 106 out of 317 districts in England for health deprivation and disability. The District is within the more deprived 50% of local authority districts for this domain which measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health<sup>2</sup>

Life expectancy at birth in Cannock Chase was below the England average for both men and women between 2015 and 2017.

Men living in the most deprived areas of Cannock Chase had a life expectancy 6.9 years below that of their peers living in the least deprived areas of the District during 2015 – 2017. This was similar for women in Cannock Chase with those living in the most deprived areas of the District estimated to have a life expectancy shorter by 6.8 years.

The proportion of Cannock Chase population aged 65+ is forecast to increase by nearly fifth by 2027 (19.8%), with a rise of 37.7% estimated in residents aged 85+<sup>3</sup>

This increase in older age people raises the profile of health conditions associated with older age, particularly dementia. Cannock Chase is a dementia friendly district supported by the Dementia Action Friendly Alliance formed in 2016.

The estimated dementia diagnosis rate for people aged 65+ in the District in 2019 is 73.9% - above the England average of 68.7%.

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<sup>1</sup> English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD)

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, The English of Indices of Deprivation 2019 (September 2019)

<sup>3</sup> Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase Locality Profile Data Pack (September 2018)

Health related quality of life for older people in the District was below the England average in 2016-17 when around 17.9% of people aged 60+ were living in income deprived households.<sup>4</sup>

The 2011 Census revealed that a high proportion of Cannock residents provided substantial amounts of unpaid care.

Cannock Chase District Council is committed to ensuring that all eligible Disabled Facilities Grants applicants receive the appropriate home adaptation to meet their needs, in order that they and their families can remain living in their own homes safely, independently, confidently and with dignity for as long as possible

In 2017 Cannock Chase District Council withdrew from the Staffordshire-wide Home Improvement Agency and since then Council officers have been working closely with Occupational Therapists (OTs) to deliver DFGs to disabled residents of the district.

## 6. Links to Council's Strategic Objectives

This policy supports the Council's Strategic objectives of increasing housing choice, sustaining safe and secure communities and supporting the elderly and vulnerable, given that its intention is to enable residents who choose to live independently in their own home, have the ability to do so rather than being obliged to move into residential or nursing care homes.

## 7. Equality Impact Assessment

This revision of the Housing Assistance Policy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment which may be viewed at [\(LINK\)](#)

## 8. Principles of Assistance

The Council is a Housing Authority and under the Housing (Grants, Construction and Regeneration) Act 1996 has a statutory duty to provide grant aid to disabled people for a range of adaptations to their homes.

The Council recognises the vast majority of disabled people (all ages) live in general, non-specialist, housing. Home adaptations therefore play a key role in enabling these residents of the district to live a safe, healthy and independent life at home.

Home adaptations can be effectively used to reduce health and social care costs, decrease the risk of injuries in the home, e.g. from falls, enable faster hospital discharge, delay the point at which residential care is required and support individuals who experience functional and cognitive difficulties or have long-term chronic conditions e.g. dementia.

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<sup>4</sup> Public Health England, Public Health Outcomes Framework <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework> (September 2019)

The Council is committed to using the available public funds to fulfil its statutory responsibilities towards the adaptation of the homes of eligible residents living with a disability through its Disabled Facilities Grant programme.

The policy aims to provide flexibility in order to deliver an efficient and effective response to the need for property adaptations for disabled persons, to reduce the number of people living in homes in the private sector that have category 1 hazards and to increase the number of people able to live independently at home. The provision and performance of mandatory grants and financial assistance in accordance with this policy will be subject to regular monitoring.

The Council recognises that these policies cannot cover every likely situation and there will be people who genuinely are in need of some form of urgent support or assistance that they are precluded from accessing. In these situations this policy provides the opportunity to consider offering assistance in exceptional circumstances as determined by the Head of Service.

Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to the following:-

- the needs of the individual applicant are extreme
- the adaptations or equipment required are of a specialist nature .
- the adaptations or equipment is expensive

## 9. Better Care Fund (BCF) Supporting Measures

### Agency Fees and charges

The Government funding made available through the Better Care Fund (BCF) to the Council in support of its Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Programme may be used for activities in addition to the provision of mandatory DFGs where the activities support the national aims of the Better Care Fund. This includes reasonable agency fees and charges (staffing and resources costs) associated with delivering this policy, including managing the adaptation project on behalf of the applicant, providing OT advice and support, scheme design and specifications, appointing the contractor, applying for Planning and/or Building Control permissions, agreeing a commencement date, supervising the works on site by carrying out regular site visits, agreeing the completion of the works and making grant payments.

Although the demand for DFGs must be met first, the Council's agency fees and other charges (OT provision) associated with the delivery of the DFG programme and this policy will be assessed in total and drawn down from the annual DFG allocation, rather than being charged to each individual grant, thereby reducing the full grant entitlement to the applicant. Qualifying applicants will therefore be able to utilise the full amount of their grant entitlement on the provision of the necessary adaptations

and, in the absence of the administration fees, the ongoing financial burden (land charges) on them will be lower.

It is accepted that the Council's fees and costs will not be fully recovered, as they do not take account of the full staff time engaged in the process of administering and delivering DFGs in accordance with this policy. The proportion of the annual BCF used to contribute towards the administration processes includes the costs incurred by the Council for abortive work, namely work undertaken in good faith which does not conclude in the successful completion of an adapted home. This may arise at any stage in the process, from initial enquiry to final completion, normally as a result of a change in the applicant's circumstances, such as they enter nursing/residential care, are taken into hospital or sadly pass away.

Monies reimbursed to the Council in accordance with the application of the local land charge following the sale or disposal of a property which has been the subject of a Disabled Facilities Grant are returned to the Service's budget, to fund further grant applications.

The Council reserves the right to review the level of reclaimed costs for administering and delivering this policy as part of its annual budget setting process.

Other schemes targeted at supporting the aims of the BCF and included in this policy are:

- **Hospital Prevention and Discharge Assistance** - aimed at providing minor adaptations and other works designed to prevent admission to hospital, care or nursing home or to assist with speedy discharge from hospital
- **Discounting Applicants Contribution up to £5,000** – aimed at providing assistance to applicants who are required to make a significant or unaffordable contribution to the adaptations following the means test.
- **Dementia Friendly Grant** – aimed at providing adaptations required to assist the person diagnosed with dementia or cognitive/behavioural conditions to manage their surroundings and retain their independence.
- **Relocation Grant** - To meet the reasonable costs associated with moving where the existing home is considered not suitable for adaptations
- **Passported Benefits** – To include entitlement to Local Council Tax Reduction as a passported benefit
- **Assistive Technology Grant** – aimed at supporting a technology based approach to keeping people safe and well in their homes. For example, the provision of life line, fall detectors and key safes.
- **Carer Support Grant** – aimed at providing appropriate accommodation for a carer where they are required to provide 24/7 care
- **OT Assessment assistance** – to provide Occupational Therapy assistance in the development of reports for non for charitable organisations/institutions operating in the Cannock Chase District.



- **Extended warranties** – assistance with the provision of extended warranties for 3 years for all adaptations which require electrical installations such as through-floor lifts, step lifts, stair lifts, closomats etc.

## 10. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant

Cannock Chase District Council, in its role as a local housing authority, has a statutory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to qualifying applicants under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

The purpose of the mandatory grant is set out in section 23(1) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act and includes:-

- Facilitating access to and from the dwelling
- Making the dwelling safe
- Facilitating access to a room usable as a principal family room
- Facilitating access to a room used for sleeping
- Facilitating access to a room in which there is a lavatory
- Facilitating access to a bathroom
- Facilitating access to a room in which there is a wash hand basin
- Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food
- Improving or providing a heating system to meet the needs of the disabled occupant
- Facilitating the use of a source of power, light, or heat by altering the position of controls
- Facilitating access and movement around the dwelling to enable the care of a person who is normally resident there and is in need of such care
- Access to the garden

Further detail on the nature of the work that may be grant aided is provided at **APPENDIX 1**

The provision of a DFG is dependent on the work being both necessary and appropriate and reasonable and practicable

**Necessary and Appropriate** – in order to determine if the works are ‘necessary and appropriate’ the Council has engaged an Occupational Therapist to assess the disabled person’s needs and provide a report indicating the nature of the adaptations and aids required to meet the needs identified.

**Reasonable and Practicable** – the Council must decide whether the works required are ‘reasonable and practicable’ considering the age and condition of the dwelling, along with the nature and cost of the works required.

## Amount of Mandatory DFG

The maximum mandatory grant payable for a single application is set by order and is currently £30,000. This amount is reduced by any contribution assessed as payable by the grant applicant.

## Mandatory Assistance Requirements

- Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are grants that local Housing Authorities must make available to residents who meet defined disability and financial criteria.
- The applicant for a DFG must be assessed as being disabled in accordance with the provisions of Section 100 of the Housing (Grants, Construction and Regeneration) Act 1996.
- For the purposes of the legislation a person is disabled if:
  - Their sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired;
  - They have a mental disorder or impairment of any kind; or
  - They are physically substantially disabled by illness, injury or impairment present since birth or otherwise.
- A person aged 18 or over is considered to be disabled if:
  - They are registered as a result of any arrangement made under section 29(1) of the national Assistance Act, or
  - They are a person for whose welfare arrangements have been made under that section or might be made under it
- A person aged under 18 is considered disabled if:
  - They are registered in register of disabled children maintained under the Children Act, or
  - In the opinion of the social services authority (Staffordshire County Council) they are a disabled child as defined for the purposes of Part III of the Children Act 1989.
- The proposed work must meet one or more of the assessed needs of the disabled occupant.
- The grant is subject to a means test for adults and this will determine what, if any, financial contribution the applicant must make towards the cost of the adaptation work are exempt from the means test.
- Applications from adults in receipt of specified (“passported”) benefits and for children under the age of 19 are exempt from the means test. Further information on passported benefits can be found at **APPENDIX 2**.

- Assistance is available to an applicant who currently does not live in the district but intends to relocate, either alone or with family, to a property which is, and requires adaptations to the property to meet his/her identified needs. This is subject to all other criteria for the grant being met.
- The disabled person must intend to remain in the property as their only or main residence for a minimum period of five years or such shorter period as health and other relevant circumstances permit.
- The Scheme of adaptation work must be necessary and appropriate to meet the assessed needs of the disabled occupant.
- The work must also be determined by the Council as being reasonable and practicable, having regard to the age and condition of the property to be adapted and the nature of the proposed adaptation(s).
- Any charges and fees associated with the administration of the grant application will be drawn directly from the Better Care Fund allocation to the Council and will not affect the grant maximum value.
- In the event that available funds are limited, applications may be placed to a Waiting List and subject to prioritisation. Further information on the prioritisation process can be found at “ Prioritisation and Waiting list”
- Where the applicant is the owner, or has an owner’s interest in the property, a land charge for between £5,000 and a maximum of £10,000, depending on the cost of the works will be applied for a period of 10 years following the completion of the work. Further information on the application of land charges can be found at “Repayment of Grants and Land Charges”

## 11. Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance

In addition to providing mandatory DFG’s, the Council has the power to offer discretionary financial assistance by virtue of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.

Using these powers and in certain specific circumstances, this policy includes discretionary DFG assistance for private sector adaptations that do not meet the criteria for a mandatory grant, or exceed the maximum level of funding available (currently £30,000).

All discretionary grants are subject to sufficient funds being available for the Council to meet its legal duty to provide adaptations for cases where a mandatory grant is required.

In cases where funds are limited, new enquiries will be placed on a Waiting List and the Council will assess each case on its own merits and the priority of each case will be determined in accordance with the Prioritisation Criteria set out at “ Prioritisation and Waiting list”

### Discretionary Top-up Assistance to Mandatory DFG Grant

A top-up grant up to a maximum of £20,000 (previously £15,000) in those cases where the proposed works identified a part of a comprehensive adaptation scheme exceed the maximum grant limit applicable to the Mandatory Assistance grant.

Each case will be considered on its own merits by the Head of Service and one or more of the following criteria must be met :-

- The applicant has been assessed and is eligible for a mandatory grant
- The household is considered to be in financial hardship
- All other means of funding have been explored and discounted.

Successful applications will receive the funds in the form of a discretionary grant.

Where the applicant is the owner or has an owner's interest in the property a land charge for the full amount of the discretionary top-up grant will be applied for a period of 10 years following the completion of the work.

Grant maximum £20,000

### Discretionary Hospital Prevention and Discharge Assistance

This discretionary grant is available for cases where the disabled person is in urgent need of adaptation work to assist them to live independently in their own home, to prevent them from becoming an in-patient in a hospital, care home or nursing home or to assist with their discharge from hospital at the earliest opportunity.

The maximum grant is £12,000 and will include adaptations such as:-

- Stair lifts (straight or curved)
- Vertical “through floor” lifts
- External step lifts and ramps
- Door widening
- Small scale bathroom, bedroom or kitchen adaptations
- Ceiling track hoists

The type of works may also include, but are not limited to, repairs to bring a property up to decent homes standard, to remove identified Category 1 hazards, for example boiler/central heating repairs, house clearances/disinfestations, structural repairs to address damp and mould.

The grant will not be subject to a means test to enable it to be processed as quickly as possible.

As a discretionary grant, if the applicant is the owner or has an owner's interest in the property, a land charge for the full amount of the discretionary top-up grant will be applied for a period of 10 years following the completion of the work.

Grant maximum £12,000

### Discretionary Assistance discounting up to £5,000 contributions

For those applicants undergoing the Test of Resources, contributions may range from "nil" to several thousands of pounds and is calculated based on their financial status and assumed capacity to secure a loan for the relevant contribution.

In many cases this is not feasible and consequently a proportion of grant applications do not progress to completion, because the applicants do not have the financial resource to meet the assessed contribution.

This discretionary assistance is aimed at discounting the first £5,000 of the applicants assessed contribution thereby reducing the number of abortive applications and encouraging a greater number of applications progress through to completion; resulting in more disabled residents being able to live independently and safely in their home for longer.

Grant maximum £5,000

### Discretionary Dementia Friendly Assistance

Where the disabled person is diagnosed with dementia, or other cognitive impairment or a recognised long term behavioural condition including but not limited to such conditions as Autism, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) etc., works to make homes friendly and to help the person live safely, manage their surroundings and retain their independence for longer will be eligible for funding.

The types of works available may include:-

- Provision of a safe space
- Colour and contrast decorating
- Carbon monoxide/ cold/heat alarms
- Lighting
- Safety flooring

- Digital assistive technology

This list is not exhaustive and each case will be considered with the assistance and advice from the Council's external Occupational Therapist.

The grant will not be subject to a means test.

Grant maximum £10,000

### Discretionary Relocation Assistance

A relocation grant may be available to an applicant who owns or privately rents their property and the identified adaptations involve substantial structural alterations or extensions that are considered not to be feasible or reasonable.

Applicants must be 18 or over on the date of the application and in the case of a disabled child, the parent(s) would make the application.

Any application must be supported by a recommendation made by an Occupational Therapist and the Council and the OT must be satisfied that the proposed property already meets the needs of the disabled person without further adaptation or are satisfied that it can be adapted at a reasonable cost. (If the combined cost of adapting the new home and specific relocation expenses are less than the cost of the adaptation of the existing home).

Applicants must be relocating within the Cannock Chase District.

Applications must be submitted prior to relocation; grants cannot be paid retrospectively and assistance will not be given towards the purchase price of the new property.

The new property must be the disabled person's main residence.

The specific eligible relocation expenses are:-

- Estate agents fees
- Solicitors costs
- Survey costs stamp duty
- Removal expenses
- Disconnection/reconnection of appliances

The relocation grant will be subject to the same test of resources as the mandatory DFG unless the relocation is for a disabled child in which case no test will be applied.

Grant maximum £7,000

### Discretionary Assistive Technology Assistance

Advances in assistive technology are currently available to support disabled and older people living in their own home. This discretionary grant of up to £3,000 is designed to cover the purchasing of such technology including life lines, fall detectors, flood detectors, extreme temperature sensors, GPS Tracker pendants, key safes and for the payment of the monthly monitoring fee to the call centre (if required) for a period of up to 3 years. However following the expiry of this period, the applicant will be responsible for continuing with the monitoring fee.

Any application must be supported by a recommendation made by an Occupational Therapist or GP.

The grant will be subject to a means test and a land charge for the full amount of the discretionary top-up grant will be applied for a period of 10 years following the installation of the required equipment.

Grant maximum £3,000.

### Discretionary Carer Support Assistance

In the relatively rare cases where the disability of an individual is so profound that care for that person is required 24 hours per day, and no existing provision is available to accommodate the carers providing such care, the cost of the adaptation to property in order to accommodate the carers may be met from the grant.

Such costs may include adaptation of a suitable room within the existing dwelling, the provision of a bed and locker for personal items.

The grant will be subject to the same test of resources as the mandatory DFG unless the grant is for a disabled child in which case no test will be applied.

As a discretionary grant, if the applicant is the owner or has an owner's interest in the property, a land charge for the full amount of the discretionary top-up grant will be applied for a period of 10 years following the completion of the work.

Grant maximum £15,000

### Discretionary OT Assessment Assistance

This discretionary assistance is available to charitable organisations /institutions that are operating in the Cannock Chase district and require an OT Assessment Report in order to assess adaptation schemes to meet the needs of their residents.

An application can be made for assistance of up to £200 towards the cost of the OT assessment.

The grant will not be subject to a means test or a land charge.

Grant maximum £200

## Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR)

Applicants in receipt of LCTR will be exempted from the requirement of the Test of Resources. (Means Test) Prior to the Government's revision of the list of passported benefits in 1996, applicants in receipt of Council Tax Benefit were exempt from the Test of Resources. Council Tax Benefit is a similar benefit to LCTR, but is no longer available. Inclusion of entitlement to LCTR as a passported benefit restores the pre-1996 position and consequently will enable a number of residents receiving LCTR to apply without undergoing the Test of Resources.

### Extended Warranties.

Extended warranties for 3 years will be provided for all adaptations which require electrical installations such as through-floor lifts, step lifts, stair lifts, closomats

## 12. The Application Process

### (a) Eligibility

Any person who makes an application for mandatory and discretionary DFG assistance must

- (i) be disabled, as set out in criteria of Section 100 of the Housing, (Grants, Construction and Regeneration) Act 1996,
- (ii) be over 18 years of age at the date of the application,
- (iii) live in, or intend to live in, a dwelling, a qualifying houseboat, or a qualifying park home, within the district of Cannock Chase Council, as his/her only main residence.
- (iv) have an owner's interest in the dwelling (other than an interest by virtue of being a Registered Social Landlord under Part 1 of the Housing Act 1996 or being eligible for such registration), or be a tenant or licensee of the dwelling, alone or jointly with others but not being a member of the landlord's family, with a tenancy or licence permitting occupation of the dwelling for a minimum period of 5 years after the completion of the relevant works.
- (v) have the power or duty to carry out works and where appropriate the owner's consent in writing to carry out the works
- (vi) satisfy such test(s) of resources as the Council may from time to time have in place. Children and young people under the age of 19 are exempt from the test of resources.
- (vii) not be ineligible, by virtue of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, or regulations made under the Act or any other enactment.

The Council acknowledges that homeowners have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their homes are properly maintained. However the Council reserves



the right to offer assistance to home owners deemed to be vulnerable or in cases of hardship, where the works would ensure that the home is made safe, healthy and appropriately adapted to meet the needs of the disabled individual.

## (b) Enquiry

Initial enquiries from adult Disabled residents are directed to Staffordshire Cares, part of Staffordshire County Council, who has a responsibility as Social Care Authority to provide community care equipment and minor adaptations (which a person has been assessed to need and for which he/she is eligible) free of charge, provided the cost is less than £1,000.

If a more comprehensive scheme is required to adapt the person's home because the person's needs cannot be fully met in this way and it will cost more than £1,000 Staffordshire Cares will refer the person to Cannock Chase Council for a Disabled Facilities Grant.

Enquiries in relation to DFGs for disabled children and young people are generally received from Occupational Therapists in Staffordshire County Council's Children's Disability Service.

## (c) Referral

For DFG cases Staffordshire Cares will complete a form providing Cannock Chase Council with their contact details and identifying the person's needs. If the disabled person is a Council tenant, the referral will be forwarded to the Council's Housing Maintenance Team, which is responsible for carrying out adaptations to council properties and the case will not progress into the DFG system.

## (d) GDPR and Data Protection

New legal requirements apply to the sharing of sensitive personal information which is required to ensure that the home adaptation meets the identified needs of the disabled person. An appointment will be made with the person to explain the data protection requirements and obtain written permission to share medical information about the disabled person with the Council's appointed Occupational Therapy Service, suppliers of specialist equipment and building contractors who will be engaged to carry out the necessary construction work.

**In the absence of this permission no further progress can be made on the referral.**

## (e) Test of Resources (Means Test) and Benefits Check.

In the case of adults it is necessary to carry out a Test of Resources (means test) to determine if the person is required to make a contribution towards the cost of the works adapt their home. If, however they are in receipt of particular benefits they are “passport” through the means test and will not have a contribution to make. Further details on “passport” benefits are available in **Appendix 2**

Similarly children and young people under the age of 19 years are not required to make a contribution.

The means testing is conducted by the Council’s Benefits Team and is an essential part of the process. If people require assistance in completing the mean test, arrangements are made for an officer to visit and assist as far as possible. Where people are unwilling to provide the necessary financial information, the Council will unfortunately, be unable to proceed to the next stage of the process.

If a person is required to make a contribution, this will be explained by one of the Service Technical officers. Contributions are collected by the Council and placed in an account ready to transfer to the building contractor on satisfactory completion of the works.

**In the absence of a means test result, where one is required, no further progress can be made on the referral.**

## (f) OT Assessment

The Council’s Occupational Therapy Service will be notified of the person’s details and will arrange to visit the property to assess the person’s needs and how they may be met in their particular home circumstances. The Occupational Therapist (OT) will determine what is “**necessary and appropriate**” and will then produce a report which is submitted to the Council’s Technical Officers.

## (g) Design of Scheme

The Council's Technical officers work with the recommendations of the OT to design the scheme of works to adapt the home to meet the needs of the disabled resident.

In doing so the Technical Officer must assess whether the works required are both "**reasonable and practicable**". The Technical Officer will explain the proposed scheme to the disabled person and will endeavour to answer and questions that arise.

This assessment must consider:-

- The layout, construction age and condition of the accommodation.
- The number, ages and needs of the other occupants of the accommodation.
- The use of the accommodation by the disabled person and any other occupants
- The location of the accommodation e.g. steep access to the property.
- Any other options that have been considered less practicable than the proposed work
- The cost of the proposed work is assessed as reasonable having regard to the likely cost of any alternatives.
- The success of adaptations carried out in similar types of accommodation
- The implications of carrying out the required adaptation with regard to its future use and classification and potential hardship issues, particularly with regard to spare room subsidy.

Where it is not reasonable and practicable to adapt the property to meet the identified needs other options, for example relocation may be considered.

If other work, not specified by the Occupational Therapist, is requested by the disabled person, the homeowner may make arrangements directly with the building contractor to carry out the works. However, the Council will be unable to supervise such additional work, nor will it be able to fund them as part of the grant and the cost must be met by the homeowner/applicant.

## (h) Estimation of Costs

The Council will provide details of the proposed scheme to one or more building contractors who are experienced in carrying out adaptation work so that an estimate of the cost can be made. The Council is legally obliged to allocate the work to the contractor offering the lowest estimate.

Applicants may, if they wish, select their own building contractor to carry out the work. This is called a “**preferred scheme**” and the Council would not be involved in managing the delivery of the scheme or works in such cases.

The Council will only be able to fund the work to the value of the lowest estimate. Consequently, any additional cost must be met by the applicant.

## (i) Grant Application

Once the scheme has been designed and the estimates produced, a formal application can be made. In addition to the scheme and the estimate the following information will be required in support of an application:-

- A certificate Future occupation (confirming the applicant’s intention to stay in the property for at least 5 years)
- An Owners certificate from either the applicant (if an owner) or the relevant landlord (if the applicant is a tenant).
- Confirmation of ownership, e.g. land registry certification or equivalent; or permission from the owner.
- Proof of financial information and a test of resources to determine grant eligibility, or alternatively proof of a qualifying benefit dated within 3 months of grant approval.
- A completed referral from a suitable qualified person (The OT Assessment report).

If any of this information is not available it will delay progress of the application for a grant.

## (j) Grant Determination

On receipt of a full and valid grant application the Council must issue a decision on approval within 6 months. The Council aims to provide a decision on urgent applications within 3 working days and all other cases within 20 working days.

All applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of the application.

Where the Council is likely to refuse an application for a DFG, the Council will contact the applicant to give them the opportunity to provide additional information prior to a formal refusal being made.

Where the Council has no option but to refuse an application for a grant, the Council will advise the applicant of the reasons for the refusal.

## (k) Appeals and Reviews

An applicant has a right to request a review of this decision which should be made in writing to the Private Sector Housing Team Leader within 28 days of the date of the refusal letter.

Where a Review of a refusal is requested the private Sector Housing Team Leader will provide a written response to the applicant within 10 working days.

If the applicant is dissatisfied with the response they have the right to escalate the matter to the Head of Service.

Where the applicant remains dissatisfied they may pursue a complaint through the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure, a details of which are available on the Council's website.

## (l) Unexpected Additional Costs

In circumstances where, following the approval of the grant, additional unforeseen works are required to address problems or issues that arise on site, such as poor ground conditions, unknown locations of utilities, dry/wet rot, etc. the Council will have due regard to the increase of the level of funding awarded to ensure that the issue does not prevent the completion of the agreed scheme of adaptation work.

The applicant will be notified in writing of any amendment to the grant award.

## (m) Additional Client Works

Applicants may, if they wish, have the work done to a higher specification than that of the proposed scheme. This is called a "preferred scheme" and may include the use of higher value or non-standard items than have been estimated for by the Council's contractor, such as decorative tiles, or other specific equipment or aids.

The Council will only be able to fund the work to the value of the lowest estimate. Any additional cost must be met by the applicant.

## (n) Permissions and Consents

Some schemes of work will require permission or consent from a range of organisations. These consents may include, but are not limited to, building regulations approval, planning permission, build-over agreements, and Party Wall Act agreements. In addition where gas and electrical systems are affected, gas and electrical safety certificates will be required. The Council will ensure that the specific permissions/consents/certificates required will be

obtained by the contractor and provided to the applicant on completion of the work.

## (o) Supervision

Site supervision will be carried out by the Council's Technical Officer who will make records of the visits made, and of any advice or instructions given to the contractor and any complaints or concerns of the applicant.

In particular site supervision will cover the following:-

- A full inspection of the works carried out to date.
- An assessment of the standard of work and in particular an assessment of whether the works carried out complies with the specification and plans
- Any concerns or complaints of the applicant.
- The availability of services; e.g. water, gas, electricity and heating whilst the works are in progress.
- Any problems with the proposed works specification that would require the input of the OT or the owner of the property; e.g. the landlord.

## (p) Completion of Works

Adaptation schemes must be completed within 12 months of the approval date. However in exceptional circumstances this period may be extended.

On notification of the completion of the approved work the Council's Technical Officer will visit the adapted property to confirm that it has been completed in accordance with the approved plans and specifications and has been done to a satisfactory standard.

The Council will issue a completion pack to the applicant containing all the documentation in relation to the permissions, consents, warranties and certificates generated during the course of the work.

## (q) Payment of Grant

Where an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant (mandatory or discretionary) has been approved, the grant may be paid

- In whole after the satisfactory completion of the eligible works, subject to any delayed payment notification in the approval document; or
- In part by instalments as the work progresses to an approved standard and the balance after the

satisfactory completion of the works subject to any delayed payment notification in the approval document.

If a grant is paid by instalments, the aggregate of the instalments paid before completion of the eligible works shall not exceed 90% of the amount of the grant awarded.

Where a dispute arises regarding the standard of the works the Council will withhold any payment until the works have been satisfactorily completed in the professional opinion of the Council's Technical Officer.

If the works meet the Council's approval but the applicant is not satisfied the Council will not unreasonably withhold payment to the contractor.

## (r) Maintenance and Warranties

All equipment and fixtures, and associated modifications to properties undertaken as part of a DFG are "gifted" to the applicant. Cannock Chase Council is not responsible for the maintenance or repair of items or the restoration of properties to their condition prior to the award of a DFG

Equipment supplied such as ceiling track hoists, step lifts, through floor lifts stair lifts, Closomat toilets and various other items will be subject to an extended 3 year manufacturer's warranty including servicing. The grant funding covers this extended warranty. However following the expiry of this period, the applicant will be responsible for the servicing and maintenance of any equipment provided.

Staffordshire County Council is notified of the installation of all ceiling track hoists, step lifts, through floor lifts, because as the Social Care Authority it is responsible for ensuring that such equipment is subject to regular safety checks.

## (s) Changes in Circumstances

Certain changes in the applicant's circumstances may affect the payment of grant.

Such changes, prescribed by legislation, are:

- where the works cease to be necessary or appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled person;
- the disabled occupant ceases to occupy the dwelling; or

- the disabled occupant dies.

In such circumstances the Council can decide:

- not to pay the grant, or pay any further instalments;
- that some or all of the works should be completed and grant or partial grant will be paid; or
- that the grant application should be re-determined.

## (t) Repayment of Grant/Land Charges

Where the Council approves an application for a mandatory grant amount exceeding £5000 and the applicant has an owners' interest in the premises on which the works are to be carried out, the Council will demand the repayment of the grant which exceeds £5000 up to a maximum of £10,000 if-

- a) the recipient disposes (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) of the premises in respect of which the grant was given within 10 years of the certified date; and
- b) the Council is satisfied that it is reasonable in all the circumstances to require the repayment having considered-
  - i. The extent to which the recipient of the grant would suffer financial hardship were s/he to be required to repay all or some of the grant;
  - ii. Whether the disposal of the premises is to enable the recipient of the grant to take up employment, or to change the location of his employment;
  - iii. Whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or wellbeing of the recipient of the grant or a disabled occupant of the premises; and
  - iv. Whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to live with, or near, any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the recipient of the grant is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the recipient of the grant is in need by the reason of disability or infirmity.

This condition places a local land charge on the property which is binding on any person who is the owner of the dwelling or building.

In cases of financial hardship and on representation from the grant recipient, consideration will be given on a case by case basis to further reduce the grant repayable, however this is likely to only occur if the recipient is in negative equity.



The Council may demand the repayment of a grant that has already been paid, together with any interest in the circumstances outlined above. However, each case will be considered on its merits.

The right to demand repayment also applies where an applicant ceases to be entitled to a grant before completion of the works. An example of where this may apply would be if the applicant ceases to own or have the tenancy of the dwelling to be adapted.

The Council may refuse to pay the full grant, pay any further instalments or recalculate the grant in such circumstances if:

- The grant was approved on the basis of inaccurate, incomplete or false information
- The cost of works is less than the original estimates

The Council will register a charge with Land Registry in respect of all mandatory grants discretionary grants, and the charge will remain indefinitely

## 13. Prioritisation and Waiting List

Where there is a waiting list, cases will be split into High, Medium and Low priority groups and will be moved off the waiting list in batches on the basis of the oldest cases within that group.

**Higher Priority** Cases will include:-

All children's cases

Cases where the person has two or more needs as defined under the Care Act;

Any Medium Priority Cases which have been waiting over 6 months;

Any Lower Priority Cases which have been waiting over 12 months.

**Medium Priority** Cases will include:-

Cases where the person has only one need as defined under the Care Act;

Any Lower Priority Cases which have been waiting over 6 months.

**Lower Priority** Cases will include:-

Cases where the person doesn't have any needs defined under the Care Act.

**Armed Forces Personnel**

Cannock Chase District Council has marked its support for the local armed forces services community by adopting the Armed Forces Community Covenant<sup>5</sup>. The covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local armed forces representatives. It not only recognises the contribution of serving personnel, their families and veterans but importantly it identifies practical ways the Council can help them access support to help them adjust to life after leaving the services.

In this regard, where a priority system is in place this policy will class an application made by or on behalf of ex-service personnel as a priority 1 providing the priority status is supported by an Occupational Therapist and/ or GP.

## 14. Complaints

Complaints about service delivery should be made in writing or by phone to the Private Sector Housing Team Leader. Efforts are made to resolve complaints informally at the initial stage. However, if the complaint is not resolved in this manner, it will be investigated in accordance with the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure, a copy of which is available on the Council's website.

## 15. Policy Audit, Amendments and Review

The provision and performance of mandatory grants and financial assistance will be subject to regular monitoring and to internal and external auditing in order to ensure adequate procedures are in place and followed and that there is an appropriate use of public funds.

The relevant Head of Service acting in conjunction with the Portfolio Leader may from time to time make minor policy amendments which do not affect the broad thrust of the policies purpose and direction.

This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years or following significant changes to relevant legislation, Government guidance and local conditions and circumstances.

**Next Review Date: March 2023**

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<sup>5</sup> Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2012 resolved and delegated authority to the Chief Executive to sign the Armed Forces Community Covenant (Minute 103A)

## Appendix 1

### Works Eligible for Grant Aid

Examples of the type of work that may be included in each of the purpose categories is listed below. It should be this list is not exhaustive and other adaptations/aids may be considered if recommended by the Occupational Therapist.

#### **Facilitating access to and from the dwelling**

- Ramped access to the main entrance door
- Widening doors
- Resurfaced path to the entrance door
- Structural alterations for the installation of a stair lift or step lift
- Handrails

#### **Making the dwelling safe**

- Provision of lighting where safety is an issue
- Adaptations designed to minimise the risk of danger where a disabled person has behavioural problems

#### **Facilitating access to a room used for sleeping**

- Provision of door widening
- Installation of a through-floor lift where the living area is on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.

#### **Facilitating access to a room usable as a principal family room**

- Provision of a room usable for sleeping where the adaptation of an existing room in the dwelling (upstairs or downstairs) or the access to that room is unsuitable in the particular circumstances.

#### **Facilitating access to a room in which there is a lavatory**

- Provision of access to a room in which there is a lavatory.
- Provision of door widening or a through floor lift
- Provision of an adapted toilet

#### **Facilitating access to a bathroom**

- Provision of a level access shower or wetroom
- Provision of a thermostatically controlled shower or specialist bath

- Door widening

### **Facilitating access to a room in which there is a wash hand basin**

- Provision of a wash hand basin, normally in the same room as the toilet.
- Relocation of a wash hand basin
- Replacement with a more suitable type.

### **Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food**

- Alteration to the height of the kitchen sink
- A cooker point and oven-housing in a safe position and the provision of worktops either side if possible
- Work surfaces located beside the sink and each side of the cooker having a total length of 1.5m where spacing allows
- Accessible cupboards for food storage on an essential basis and space for a refrigerator

#### **Please note**

- Full adaptation will only be considered where the disabled person is the main or only user of the kitchen.
- Certain adaptations may be carried out to enable the disabled person to perform minor functions in the kitchen, such as preparing light meals or hot drinks, where most of the cooking and preparation of meals is done by another household member drinks
- Hobs, ovens, extraction systems and white goods are not provided under a DFG

### **Access to heating, lighting and power**

- Provision or improvement the existing heating, lighting or power system in the dwelling to meet the disabled person's needs.
- relocation of power points or controls.

#### **Please note**

- A grant will not be given to adapt or install heating in rooms which are not normally used by the disabled person.
- The installation of central heating to the dwelling will only be considered where the well-being and mobility of the disabled person would otherwise be adversely affected.

### **Access to a garden**

- Improving existing access where access cannot be gained via the main entrance.
- Provision of a suitable outdoor space that can be accessed safely from the dwelling to allow appreciation of the outdoor area by the disabled person.

## Appendix 2

### Test of Resources (Means Test)

A standard test of resources is undertaken for all applicants applying for a DFG in accordance with the Act to determine what, if any, contribution they are expected to make towards the cost of the adaptation work.

Children and young persons (under the age of 19 years) are exempt from the means test.

The Test of Resources only takes into account the resources of the disabled applicant and their spouse or partner, where applicable. It does not take into account the applicant's outgoings.

Applicants in receipt of one of the following types of income will be 'passported' through the means testing process:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income Based Job Employment Support Allowance
- Guarantee Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Working/Child Tax Credit (if income for tax credits is below a specified amount)
- Universal Credit
- This list is prescribed by Central Government and may be amended from time to time.

#### **Please note**

Cannock Chase Council has resolved to remove the requirement for a Test of Resources for the following cases:-

- Applicants in receipt of the benefit called "Local Council Tax Reduction"
- Applications for Discretionary Hospital Prevention and Discharge Assistance and Dementia Friendly Assistance.

## Appendix 3

### Summary of Assistance available

The tables below summarise the measures covered in the Housing Assistance Policy





Description	New /Existing	Funding	Means Test	Land Charge	Objective
DFG (Mandatory Assistance)	Existing	£30,000	Y except where a child or on passported benefits	For cost over £5,000 Max charge £10,000 Duration 10 years	Adaptation of the home in accordance with the criteria in the Housing (Grants, Construction and Regeneration) Act 1996
Discretionary Assistance - Top- up grant	New Limit raised from £15,000	£20,000	As above	Y Full amount of grant	Provide for cost of the adaptation scheme where works exceed the Mandatory £30,000 limit
Discretionary – Hospital Prevention and Discharge Assistance	New	£12,000	N	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Minor adaptations and other works designed to prevent admission to hospital, care or nursing home or assist with speedy discharge from hospital
Discretionary – Dementia Friendly - Dementia Cognitive and Behavioural conditions Adaptations Grant	New	£10,000	N	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Adaptations to assist the person diagnosed with dementia or cognitive/behavioural conditions to manage their surroundings and retain their independence.
Discretionary – Relocation Grant	New Limit raised	£7,000	Y except where a child or on passported benefits	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	To meet the reasonable costs associated with moving where the existing home is not suitable for adaptations





Description	New /Existing	Funding	Means Test	Land Charge	Objective
Discretionary – Carer support assistance	New	£15,000	Y except where a child or on passported benefits	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Provision of appropriate accommodation for a carer where required to provide 24/7 care.
Discretionary – OT Assessment assistance	New	£200	N	N	Provision of Occupational Therapy report where an organisation/charity is to fund adaptation scheme
Discretionary – Assistive technology assistance	New	£3,000	Y	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Supports a technology based approach to keeping people safe and well in their homes. eg life line, fall detectors, key safes – for purchasing equipment and monthly fee to connect with call centre (if required)

### Other measures

Extended warranties: 3 years	New	As appropriate	Included in grant	As per grant	For all adaptations which require electrical installations such as through-floor lifts, step lifts, stair lifts, closomats etc.
Local Council Tax Reduction to be considered a DFG passport benefit	New	Not applicable	N	Not applicable	Anticipated to help people in sole receipt of this benefit to access necessary adaptations.
Discounting of first £5000 of applicants contribution following means testing	New	£5,000	Y	N	Anticipated to help people who are obliged to make a significant or unaffordable contribution to the adaptations required.

## Improving Community Wellbeing PDP 2019/20 – Health, Culture and Sport

Delivery of actions for Q3				
				Total Number of Actions
Action completed	Work in progress but slightly behind schedule. Action will be completed in next Quarter	Action > 3 months / 1 Quarter behind schedule and action is required to address slippage	Action / project cannot be completed / delivered. Option to close to be agreed by Leadership Team / Cabinet	
<b>2 (67%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1 (33%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>

Cumulative progress in delivering actions - April to December 2019				
				Total Number of Actions
Action completed	Work in progress but slightly behind schedule. Action will be completed in next Quarter.	Action > 3 months / 1 Quarter behind schedule and action is required to address slippage	Action / project cannot be completed / delivered. Option to close to be agreed by Leadership Team / Cabinet.	
<b>4 (57%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3 (43%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>








## Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Frequency of reporting (Q or A)	Last year's outturn	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles</b>							
Total number of people using all of our facilities	Q	1,050,950	1,056,388	272,181	262,260	223,818	
Take up for the inclusive cycling pilot scheme	A	N/A	200				

## Projects

Approach	Key Project	Milestone(s)	Progress	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles</b>							
<b>To provide a range of culture and leisure facilities that are accessible for everyone (all ages and abilities)</b>	Produce Playing Pitch and Indoor and Outdoor facilities strategy	Finalise Strategy and report to Cabinet (13 June 2019)	Completed and reported to Cabinet on 13 June 2019	✓			
	Develop the ATP at Rugeley Leisure centre to full size	Finalise plan and submit planning application	Following adoption of the Playing Pitch Strategy in June, discussions with the Staffordshire FA are scheduled for August to discuss funding opportunities and options for planning submission. Planning application finalised for submission in January 2020	●		▲	
		Submit funding bid subject to planning application decision and appropriate funding opportunities being available					

Approach	Key Project	Milestone(s)	Progress	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles (continued)</b>							
<b>Work with our leisure partners to facilitate initiatives and projects to encourage people to participate in healthy activities</b>	Commission a review to understand why people don't participate in healthy activities and how we can encourage them to do so	Undertake review - carry out research covering current leisure provision, benchmarking, to understand expectations of physical activity levels in our District in discussion with Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (SASSOT). Potentially leading to a strategy.	In discussion with Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (SASSOT) to carry out research covering current leisure provision, benchmarking, to understand expectations of physical activity levels in our District. Potentially leading to a strategy. Cabinet approved revision of target from Q2 to Q4				X
		Prepare report on outcome of the study	Due to the slippage above, Cabinet has approved the revised target of 2020-21 for completion of the study.				
	Commonwealth Games	Attend meetings of: (a) Communications (b) Transport (c) Forestry Commission (d) Steering Group					X

Approach	Key Project	Milestone(s)	Progress	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>Opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles (continued)</b>								
<b>With partners we will encourage and support residents in taking responsibility for their food choices and dietary behaviours</b>	Develop a strategy to make it easier for residents to make healthy food choices when eating out and when buying, cooking and eating food at home	Identify Project Team, key partners and Produce PID for sign off		✓				
		Using current research, best practice and local insight, identify key settings and potential areas of influence (carried forward from 2018-19 plan)			●	✓		
		With Partners, and using the forthcoming LGA / PHE Whole Systems Approach Guide (due 2019), develop the Strategy						X
		Identify and implement pilot projects to test the strategy (soft launch)			2020-21			
		Launch Strategy (to include and Engagement Event with partners, stakeholders)			2021-22			
		Monitor and review implementation			2021-23			