



To:
All members of the
Community Wellbeing and Housing
Committee

Please reply to:
Contact: Karen Wyeth
Service: Committee Services
Direct line: 01784 446341
E-mail: k.wyeth@spelthorne.gov.uk
Date: 27 May 2026

Supplementary Agenda

Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee - Tuesday, 2 June 2026

Dear Councillor

I enclose the following items which were marked 'to follow' on the agenda for the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee meeting to be held on Tuesday, 2 June 2026:

8. Review of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Policy - Re-Introduction of Means Testing for Level Access Showers 3 - 54

Committee is asked to consider an amendment to the Council's Disabled Facilities Grant Policy.

Yours sincerely

Karen Wyeth
Corporate Governance

To the members of the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee

Councillors:

S.M. Doran (Chair)	J.R. Boughtflower	K.M. Grant
M.M. Attewell (Vice-Chair)	M. Buck	S. Gyawali
M. Arnold	R. Chandler	
C. Bateson	R.V. Geach	

Spelthorne Borough Council, Council Offices, Knowle Green

Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB

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Substitute Members: Councillors: J.T.F. Doran, H.S. Boparai, J.A. Turner, T. Burrell
and K.E. Rutherford



Committee Report Checklist

Please submit the completed checklists with your report. If final draft report does not include all the information/sign offs required, your item will be delayed until the next meeting cycle.

Stage 1

Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Yes / No	Date
Councillor engagement / input from Chair prior to briefing		
Relevant Group Head review	Yes	08/05
MAT+ review (to have been circulated at least 5 working days before Stage 2)		
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee	Yes	
	Reviewed by	
Finance comments (circulate to Finance)	A.Bozhan i	11/05
Risk comments (circulate to Lee O’Neil)		
Legal comments (circulate to Legal team)	JC	14/05/26
HR comments (if applicable)		

For reports with material financial or legal implications the author should engage with the respective teams at the outset and receive input to their reports prior to asking for MO or s151 comments.

Do not forward to stage 2 unless all the above have been completed.

Stage 2

Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Completed by	Date rec’d
Monitoring Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	L Heron	15/05/26
S151 Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	T.Collier	11/5/26
Commissioner engagement	DM	
		No issues
Confirm final report cleared by MAT		

Community Wellbeing & Housing

Date of meeting 2nd June 2026

Title	Review of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Policy – Re-Introduction of Means Testing for Level Access Showers
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	<i>Stephen Mortimer-Cleevly</i>
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	N/A
Corporate Priority	Community Addressing Housing Need Services
Recommendations	<p>Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Approve the amendment of the Council’s Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Policy to remove discretionary means test exemptions for level access showers. 2) Approve the introduction of means testing for this adaptation type in line with statutory DFG requirements under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. 3) Approve the reduction of the aids and adaptations disregard from £2000 to £1000. 4) Delegate authority to the Group Head of Community Wellbeing, in consultation with the Chair, to implement minor operational changes required to enact the revised policy. 5) Note the intention to align Spelthorne’s DFG policy with other Surrey authorities in advance of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
Reason for Recommendation	The Council is experiencing increased demand and financial pressure on the DFG budget. Aligning with national expectations and Surrey-wide policy approaches will ensure equitable, sustainable, and legally robust allocation of resources.

1. **Executive summary of the report** (*expand detail in Key Issues section below*)

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for home adaptations in Spelthorne has increased significantly, particularly for level access showers. Historically, the Council has exercised discretion to waive means testing for these adaptations, creating additional financial pressure on the DFG allocation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current discretionary exemptions are no longer financially sustainable. The national DFG framework, funded through the Better Care Fund (BCF), is under increasing scrutiny to demonstrate value for money, targeting of resources, and integration with health and social care outcomes.
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-Introduce means testing for these adaptation types, bringing Spelthorne in line with statutory expectations and neighbouring authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to approval, update policy documentation, communicate changes to residents and partners, and implement from the start of the next financial quarter.

2. Key issues

2.1 National Policy Context (DFG and BCF)

The Disabled Facilities Grant is a mandatory grant governed by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. While local authorities have discretion in policy delivery, national guidance increasingly emphasises:

- Targeting limited resources at those in greatest financial need
- Demonstrating impact on hospital discharge, prevention, and independence
- Integration with health partners via the Better Care Fund

DFG funding is now fully embedded within the Better Care Fund, meaning local authorities are expected to evidence:

- Reduction in hospital admissions and delayed discharges
- Prevention of residential care placements
- Efficient use of public funds

Maintaining blanket exemptions for high-cost adaptations is inconsistent with this direction of travel.

In the last financial year 25/26, the team delivered 141 DFG's and 527 Aids and Adaptations.

2.2 Financial Pressures and Demand Growth

Locally, Spelthorne is seeing:

- Rising demand linked to an ageing population

- Increased complexity of cases (e.g. hospital discharge, multiple conditions)
- Higher unit costs for adaptations (inflation, contractor availability)

Stairlifts and level access showers represent a significant proportion of DFG spend. Removing means testing in 2022 has:

- Increased overall grant expenditure
- Reduced available funding for higher-need households
- Created potential inequity in allocation

2.3 Equity & Fairness

The current approach creates inconsistency whereby:

- Some applicants contribute financially (via means test)
- Others receive fully funded adaptations regardless of financial capacity

Reintroducing means testing ensures:

- Fairness across applicants
- Better targeting of public funds
- Compliance with the principle of ability to pay

2.4 The Means Testing Process

Spelthorne Borough Council uses the nationally recognised FERRET software system to undertake Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) means testing assessments. FERRET is widely used by local authorities across England and applies the statutory test of resources prescribed under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

The assessment takes into account:

- household income
- savings and capital
- certain welfare benefits
- partner or spouse income
- allowable household expenditure and applicable premiums

The system calculates whether an applicant is required to make a financial contribution towards the cost of the adaptation works and, where applicable, determines the level of contribution.

2.5 Local Government Reorganisation

Across West Surrey, all authorities already apply means testing to these adaptation types.

In advance of Local Government Reorganisation, there is a clear strategic need to:

- Harmonise policies across districts and boroughs
- Reduce variation in service delivery
- Enable smoother transition to unitary structures

Failure to align now risks:

- Policy inconsistency
- Increased complexity during transition
- Financial disparities across the future authority

3. Options appraisal and proposal

3.1 Option 1 – Re-Introduce means testing (Preferred Option)

Ensures financial sustainability of the DFG budget and aligns with national policy expectations and BCF requirements.

Promotes fairness and equitable allocation.

Aligns with Surrey authorities ahead of LGR.

Protects funding for highest-need residents.

There is a potential that this will increase the administrative burden and it will ultimately mean that some residents will now have to contribute financially, there is a risk that some residents may not adapt their property.

3.2 Option 2 – Retain current exemptions

Simpler to administer and maximises accessibility for residents.

This approach is financially unsustainable and leads to an inequitable allocation of resources. Leaving us misaligned with Surrey partners and increases the risk of budget overspend.

Misalignment with Surrey authorities ahead of LGR.

4. Risk implications

4.1 **Financial risks:** high potential for an overspend on DFG budget if policy remains unchanged an introduction of means testing enables improved monitoring of spend.

4.2 **Operational risks:** there will be an inherent increased processing time as each applicant will have to be fully financially assessed

4.3 **Reputational risk:** there will likely be a perception of reduced support, but mitigations will include clear communication and signposting to additional support mechanisms.

- 4.4 **Legal risk:** we are open to potential challenge if the policy is inconsistent, the closer alignment to statutory framework and local practice should help mitigate the risks

5. Financial implications

Estimated level access showers (LAS) applications FY 25/ 26 that would have failed proposed means test	12
Average cost per LAS	£7918
Positive Impact on DFG	£95,015

In FY 25/26 Twenty-seven properties benefitted from aids and adaptations costing between £1000 and £2000, by reducing the DFG disregard to £1000 we could reduce DFG spend by an additional £13,000.

In total both changes will yield potential efficiencies of approximately £108,000.

It is important to emphasise there is a potential risk that proposed changes will increase the administrative burden and it will ultimately mean that some residents will now have to contribute financially, some residents may not adapt their property.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The DFG is a statutory grant provided under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (HGCRA). The Council is under a statutory obligation to administer DFGs to qualifying applicants.
- 6.2 Central Government makes capital funding available for DFG's as part of the Department of Health's Better Care Fund.
- 6.3 Means testing is a statutory requirement for DFG adaptations to ensure that funding is directed to those most in need. The means test assesses the income and savings of the applicant and their spouse or partner.
- 6.4 The removal of discretionary exemptions from DFG allocations is lawful under HGCRA as discretionary grants are not a statutory requirement.

Corporate implications

7. Commissioners' comments

- 7.1 No issues.

8. S151 Officer comments

- 8.1 The S151 Officer to confirm that all financial implications have been taken into account and that the recommendations would ease pressures on the DFG

Capital Programme budget enabling more funds to be available for highest needs residents.

9. Monitoring Officer comments

- 9.1 In adopting the revised policy, the Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty. The policy must be applied consistently, fairly and in accordance with its published terms. Subject to the above the Monitoring Officer confirms that the relevant legal implications have been taken into account.

10. Procurement comments

- 10.1 The Council's Contract Standing Orders must be complied with where the adaptations are procured directly by the Council. Early engagement with the Procurement Team is strongly recommended.

11. Equality and Diversity

The proposal may disproportionately affect residents with moderate financial means.

Mitigation:

- Means test ensures protection for low-income households
- Discretionary support and signposting to alternative funding
- Continued prioritisation based on clinical need

12. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

Minor positive impact through enabling residents to remain in their homes, reducing need for higher-carbon institutional care.

13. Other considerations

- Alignment with Adult Social Care priorities
- Integration with hospital discharge pathways
- Communication with occupational therapy services

14. Timetable for implementation

14.1 Milestone	Date
Committee approval	June 2026
Policy update	July 2026
Stakeholder communication	August–September 2026
Implementation	October 2026

15. Contact

- 15.1 *Stephen Mortimer-Cleevely*

Background papers:, There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft Revised DFG Policy

Appendix 2 – DFG Handbook for Surrey - Benchmarking of Surrey Authorities

Appendix 3 – Report Impact Statement

Spelthorne Borough Council

Disabled Facility Grants (DFG)

Policy 2026

Introduction to Disabled Facilities Grants.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) are a statutory function which are administrated by Spelthorne Borough Council.

DFG's are available to help fund the cost of aids and adaptations to enable a disabled person to live independently in their own home and support the provision of decent, healthy, and safe housing within the borough under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and the flexibility of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002

A DFG is only available to people who are disabled within the meaning of the National Assistance Act 1948. This means that a DFG will not be granted to a person who is solely elderly or retired.

The Council closely with Surrey County Council's Social Services Department, who will assess the needs of the client and confirm that the works are "necessary and appropriate".

This policy ensures that resources are targeted at those who would not otherwise be able to adapt, repair or improve their home. By providing adaptations to those who have a medical need and by developing a preventative approach the Council can reduce hospitalisation and improve adults' health and wellbeing. In turn this relieves some of the pressure on Social Services and NHS partners

DFG's are a means tested scheme, which will consider a disabled persons income, savings and capital owned by them and their spouse or partner. Depending on the outcome of the test, they may be required to contribute towards the cost of the works. A means test will not be conducted if they are applying on behalf of a child.

The maximum DFG available in England is £30,000. If the total cost of the works, plus any fees or VAT exceed this amount, the applicant may be required to pay the additional costs.

There is no means test for

- those who receive a non-means test benefit, for example Guaranteed Pension Credit, Housing Benefit, or Universal Credit.
 - a standard stairlift
 - a disabled child under 19 years (if in education or receiving child benefits)
 - Motor neurone disease (MND), palliative or end of life diagnosis
- Spelthorne Borough Council offer a fast-tracked process with no means testing for works up to £5000 and ignore the earnings of the person with the

diagnosis where; larger scale works are assessed as being necessary and appropriate.

The person who the grant is for must:

- own the property or be a tenant
- the property must be the disabled person's main residence
- must be a UK citizen
- have lived, or be intending to live, in the property in question for at least five years, or for such a shorter period as their health and other relevant circumstances permit

The Council needs to be satisfied that the work:

- is necessary and appropriate to meet the disabled person's needs
- is reasonable and practical
- considers things such as the effect on other residents, limited access, conservation considerations, and the structural characteristics of the property
- is of good quality and meets other safety standards (applies where grants approved and adaptations or other works are undertaken)

Land Charges

If the DFG is for a homeowner and the adaptation is over £5,000, a land charge will be placed against the property (up to £10,000). The amount placed depends on the cost of the works and will decrease yearly over the next 10 years.

Should the property be sold within 10 years of the adaptation, the amount will be repayable.

Aids and Adaptations Grant.

A Minor Aids and Adaptations Grant is available to Homeowners costing less than £1000 for a wide variety of other aids or adaptations. these include:

- works to make a home suitable for a disabled occupant's accommodation, welfare, or employment.
- providing small-scale adaptations to either fulfil needs not covered by mandatory DFG's
- avoiding the procedural complexities of mandatory DFGs, to deliver a much quicker remedy for urgent adaptations
- repairs to a previous DFG

Getting grant approval before starting work

If the work is started before a grant application is formally approved in writing the application will be disqualified.

What works are eligible?

Mandatory grants can be awarded for the following works:

- facilitating a disabled person's access to the dwelling for example, widening doors and installing ramps
- by providing or improving access to the bedroom, kitchen, toilet, wash basin and bath (and/or shower) facilities; for example, by installing a stair lift or providing a level access shower room
- facilitating the preparation of food by the disabled person.
- improving/providing a heating system to meet the disabled person's needs
- facilitating access and movement around the home to enable the disabled person to be cared for by someone dependent upon him or her needs.
- making the dwelling safe for the disabled person and others residing with him or her.
- facilitating access to and from a garden or making a garden safe.

Who can apply?

Grants are for disabled people and can be applied for by:

- the disabled person
- a person living with a disabled person,
- parent or guardian of a disabled child,
- the landlord of a property

How long will the process take?

- Spelthorne Borough Council have up to 6 months to approve a fully completed application form.
- Spelthorne Borough Council aim to complete the works within 12 months from receipt of the fully completed application in many cases these times periods are significantly shorter.

How to apply?

- speak to an Occupational Therapist (OT) who can advise on the application process.

Spelthorne Locality Team,
Ashford Centre,
Stanwell Road,
Surrey
TW15 3DU

Telephone: 01932 795 292

Email: Spelthorne.otduty@surreycc.gov.uk

- apply directly to the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) Team at Spelthorne Borough Council.

Spelthorne Borough Council,
Knowle Green,
Staines-upon-Thames,
Surrey
TW18 1XB

Telephone: 01784 448 607
Email: dfg@spelthorne.gov.uk

Complaint procedure

Spelthorne Borough Council aim to provide a high-quality and value-for-money services to all our residents.

If Spelthorne Borough Council do get something wrong, the Council try to put it right quickly and learn from mistakes, to help improve services in the future.

Feedback from residents is an important part of helping the Council to do this.

The Council will deal with all complaints fairly, consistently, and professionally.

Ways that you can contact The Council.

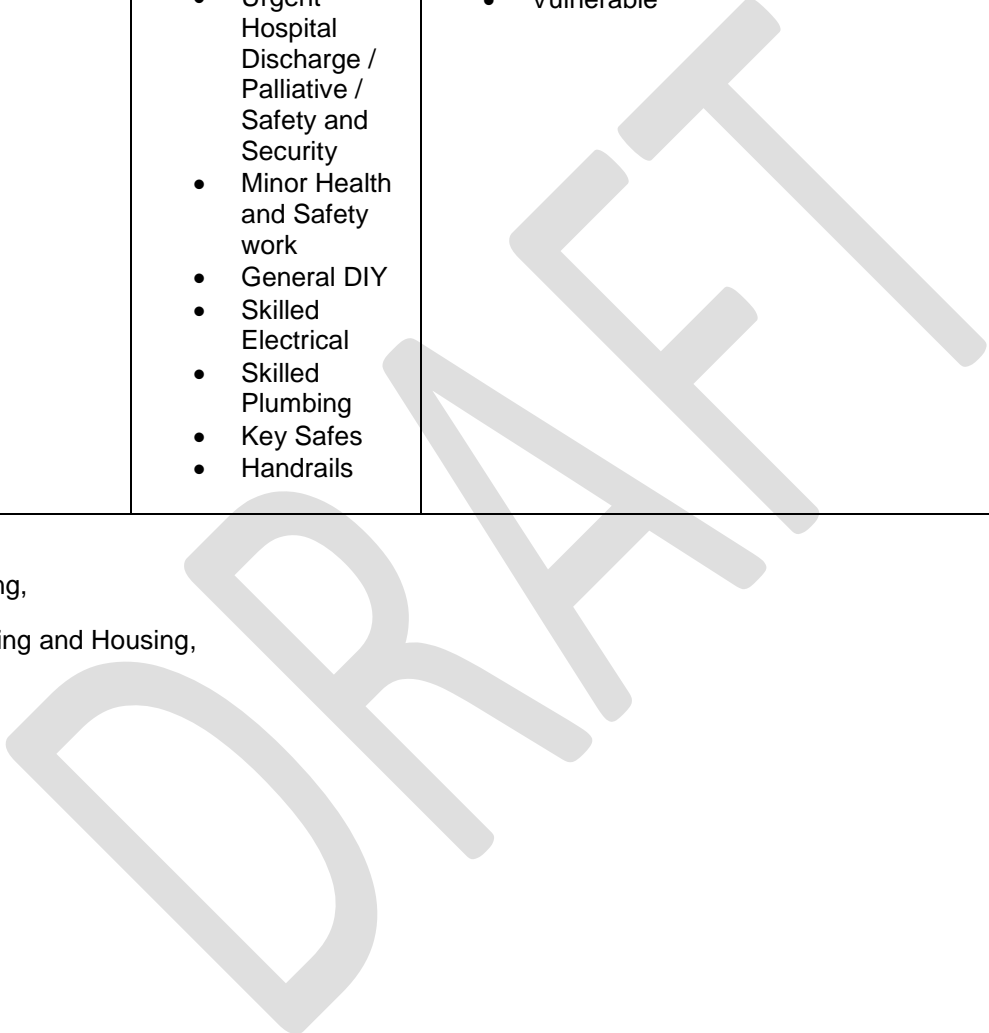
- email Customer Services
- phone us on 01784 451499
- write to us at:

Customer Service Centre
Spelthorne Borough Council
Knowle Green
Staines-upon-Thames
Surrey TW18 1XB

Scheme	Amount Available	Eligible Works	Who is Eligible	Conditions / Notes
Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory • Main priority of the DFG Team 	Up to £30,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access • Ramps • Concrete hardstanding • Stairlifts • Through lifts • Level access showers • Hoists • Door widening • Conversions • Extensions • Any larger adaptations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A disabled person who owns the property • A disabled tenant in a rented property • Parent or Guardian of a disabled child • A disabled person living in someone else's home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment • Work is necessary, appropriate, reasonable, and practical. • Fully completed application • Means tested (except in the case of) a standard stairlift, a disabled child under 19 years (if in education or receiving child benefits) an applicant with MND, palliative or end of life diagnosis as confirmed by a medical professional)
Aids and Adaptations Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Means tested • Homeowner / Private tenant • One Grant per property 	Up to £1,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale adaptations • Half steps • Ramps • Rails • Repairs to previous DFG • Warranties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A disabled person who owns the property • A disabled tenant in a privately rented property • Parent or Guardian of a disabled child • A disabled person living in someone else's home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is necessary, appropriate, reasonable, and practical. • Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment not necessary • This brings Spelthorne Borough Council in line with other Councils
Community Equipment Store (CES)	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceiling Track Hoists • Ramps • Handrails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A disabled person who owns the property • A disabled tenant in a privately rented property • Parent or Guardian of a disabled child • A disabled person living in someone else's home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment

<p>Handy Person Service (Home Link)</p>	<p>Charges may apply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dementia Service • Urgent Hospital Discharge / Palliative / Safety and Security • Minor Health and Safety work • General DIY • Skilled Electrical • Skilled Plumbing • Key Safes • Handrails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elderly 60 Years + • Disabled in receipt of DLA or PIP • Vulnerable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment • Self-referral • Owner Occupier • Private / Rented
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DFG Manager,
 Borough Lead Independent Living,
 Group Head Community Wellbeing and Housing,
 Deputy Chief Executive.



Disabled Facilities Grant Handbook

October 2025



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Introduction:

About This Booklet:

This booklet has been developed collaboratively by the Better Care Fund Team, the Surrey Adults Academy, and an Occupational Therapy (OT) apprentice.

It was co-designed with Occupational Therapy Assistant Team Managers (OT ATMs), District and Borough (D&Bs) housing colleagues from across Surrey, with additional input from Foundations.

Purpose:

The purpose of this booklet is to provide a clear overview of the legislation, policies, and procedures surrounding the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), from both an OT and housing perspective. It serves as a reference point for staff across Surrey County Council and the District and Borough Councils.

Local Variations:

Each District and Borough in Surrey operates differently, based on local needs and context. This results in each District and Borough developing their own policy to meet that need and context.

As a result, there are justified variations in how housing policies are applied, particularly in relation to adaptations. These differences naturally lead to varied outcomes. This booklet maps out those differences to provide clarity and transparency.

Ongoing Updates:

This booklet will be regularly updated to reflect any legislative or systemic changes, ensuring the information remains accurate and current.

If you are aware of any updates or changes, please contact the Better Care Fund Team so we can keep this resource up to date:

bettercarefund.surrey@surreycc.gov.uk

Acknowledgements:

With thanks to the Surrey Adult's Academy, and Sacha Harden-Boyle (Occupational Therapy Apprentice 2025), Occupational Therapy Assistant Team managers, and housing colleagues in each District and Borough, for the support in coordinating and completing this booklet.

District and Borough Contact Details:

District or Borough	Address	General Contacts Email/ Phone number	Contact details for Private owner/ HA or Private Landlords	Contact details for council tenant requests
D&B 1	D&B 1 ADDRESS	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER
D&B 2	D&B 2 ADDRESS	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER
D&B 3	D&B 3 ADDRESS	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER
D&B 4	D&B 4 ADDRESS	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER
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D&B 7	D&B 7 ADDRESS	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER
D&B 8	D&B 8 ADDRESS	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER
D&B 9	D&B 19 ADDRESS	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER
D&B 10	D&B 10 ADDRESS	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER
D&B 11	D&B 11 ADDRESS	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER

Better Care Fund (BCF) team contact details:

The Better Care Fund (BCF) supports Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) by ensuring funding is allocated to local housing authorities to provide adaptations that enable people to live independently in their homes. The BCF aims to integrate health, social care, and housing services, and the DFG is a crucial part of this integration. Adaptations funded by DFGs can help people avoid hospital admissions and stay in their homes longer, reducing the strain on health and social care systems.

Better Care Fund (BCF)	Lewis Willing Senior Programme Manager	Lewis.Willing@Surreycc.gov.uk
Better Care Fund (BCF)	Samantha Lewis Senior Business Manager	Samantha.Lewis@Surreycc.gov.uk

Context

Legislation

- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996](#)
- [The Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996](#)
- [The Housing Renewal Grants \(Services and Charges\) Order 1996](#)
- [The Disabled Facilities Grants and Home Repair Assistance \(Maximum Amounts\) \(Amendment No. 2\) \(England\) Order 2001](#)
- [The Regulatory Reform \(Housing Assistance\) \(England and Wales\) Order 2002](#)
- [The Disabled Facilities Grants \(Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes\) \(England\) Order 2008](#)
- [The Housing Renewal Grants \(Prescribed Form and Particulars\) \(Revocation\) \(England\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [Care Act 2014](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 - HSE](#)
- [The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998](#)
- [The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998](#)
- [The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992](#)
- [Armed Forces Covenant: guidance and support - GOV.UK](#)
- [NHS England » Better Care Fund](#)
- [Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970](#)
- [Children Act 1989](#)

Guidance and Frameworks

- [Better Care Fund policy framework 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)
- [Professional standards for practice, conduct and ethics | RCOT](#)
- 4.5.3 (You intervene as early as possible, to optimise outcomes and to reduce, delay or prevent future needs where possible.)
- [Adaptations without delay | RCOT](#)
- [Disabled Facilities Grant \(DFG\) delivery: Guidance for local authorities in England - GOV.UK](#)
- [Disabled Facilities Grants: Overview - GOV.UK](#)
- [Mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice.pdf](#)
- [How To Assess A DFG](#)
- [CHAPTER 1](#) (Home Adaptations for Disabled People – A Good Practice Guide)
- [Better Care Fund policy framework 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

Care Act 2014

- [Layout 1: \(Home adaptations, integration and The Care Act\)](#)
- [The Care Act 2014 and occupational therapy: a handy summary | Local Government Association](#)
- [Care Act 2014](#) –
Section 1 – Wellbeing.
Section 9 – Assessment.
Section 2 – Prevention.
Section 77 - Registers of sight impaired adults, disabled adults.
- [Care act 2014 | RCOT](#)
– **PDF:** Care Act 2014 guidance for Occupational Therapists and Foundations.



Surrey CC website

- [Major adaptations - for disabled and older people - Surrey County Council](#)
- [Adult social care and support - Surrey County Council](#)

Specialist Teams:

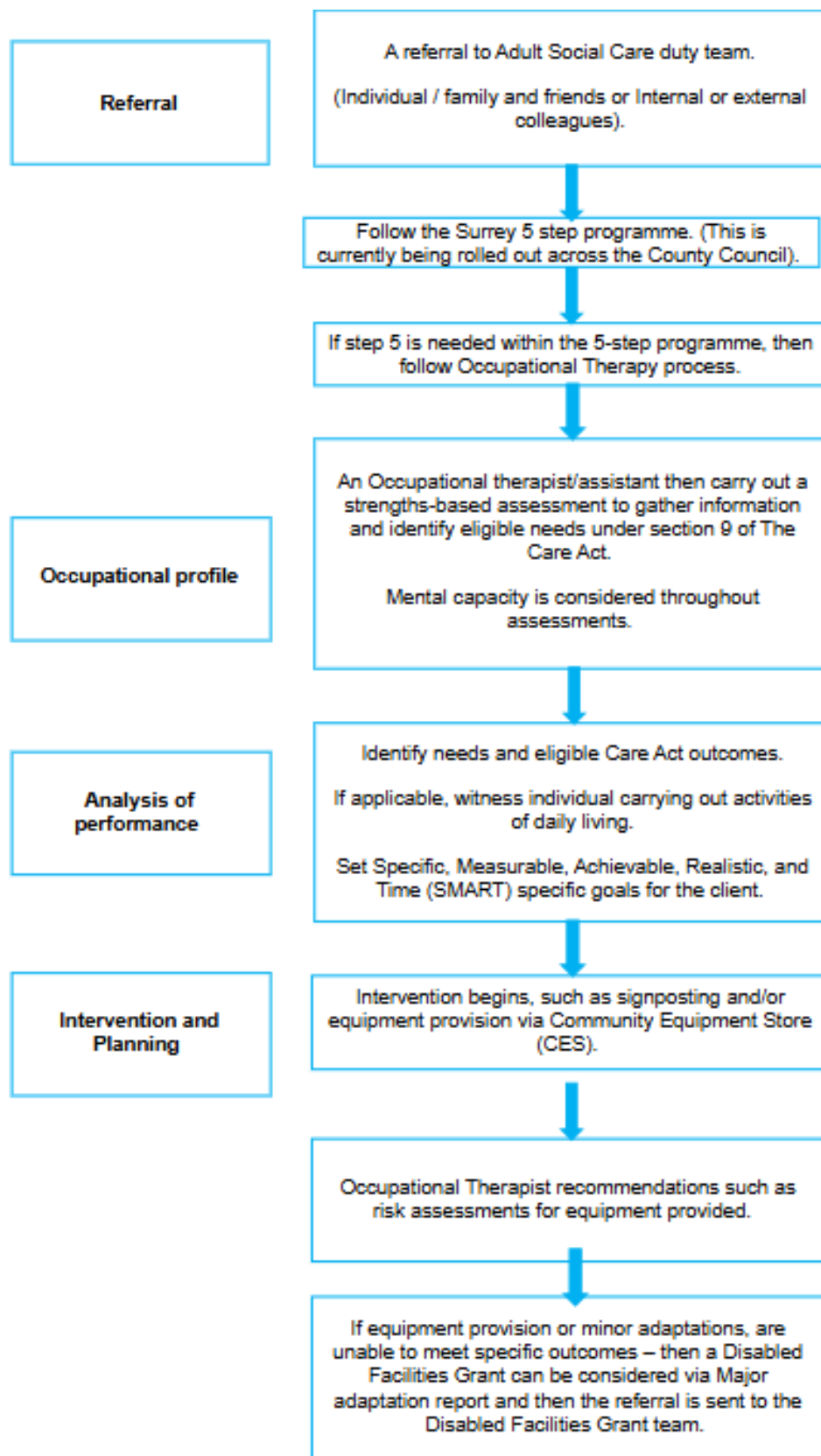
There are specialist teams that operate countywide, such as Mental Health (including Enabling Independence, Mental Health Central Duty Teams and Reablement). These services will refer to the relevant locality team or specialist (countywide) Learning Disability and Autism or Transition OT teams for DFG related cases.

The Transition Team are a specialist Adult Social Care team who support your people aged 18-25 who have a diagnosed learning or physical disability, sensory impairment or Autism. Young people are required to have an active EHCP at the point of referral which is from 14 and older. The Transition Occupational Therapy service is available to young people who open to the Transition Team.

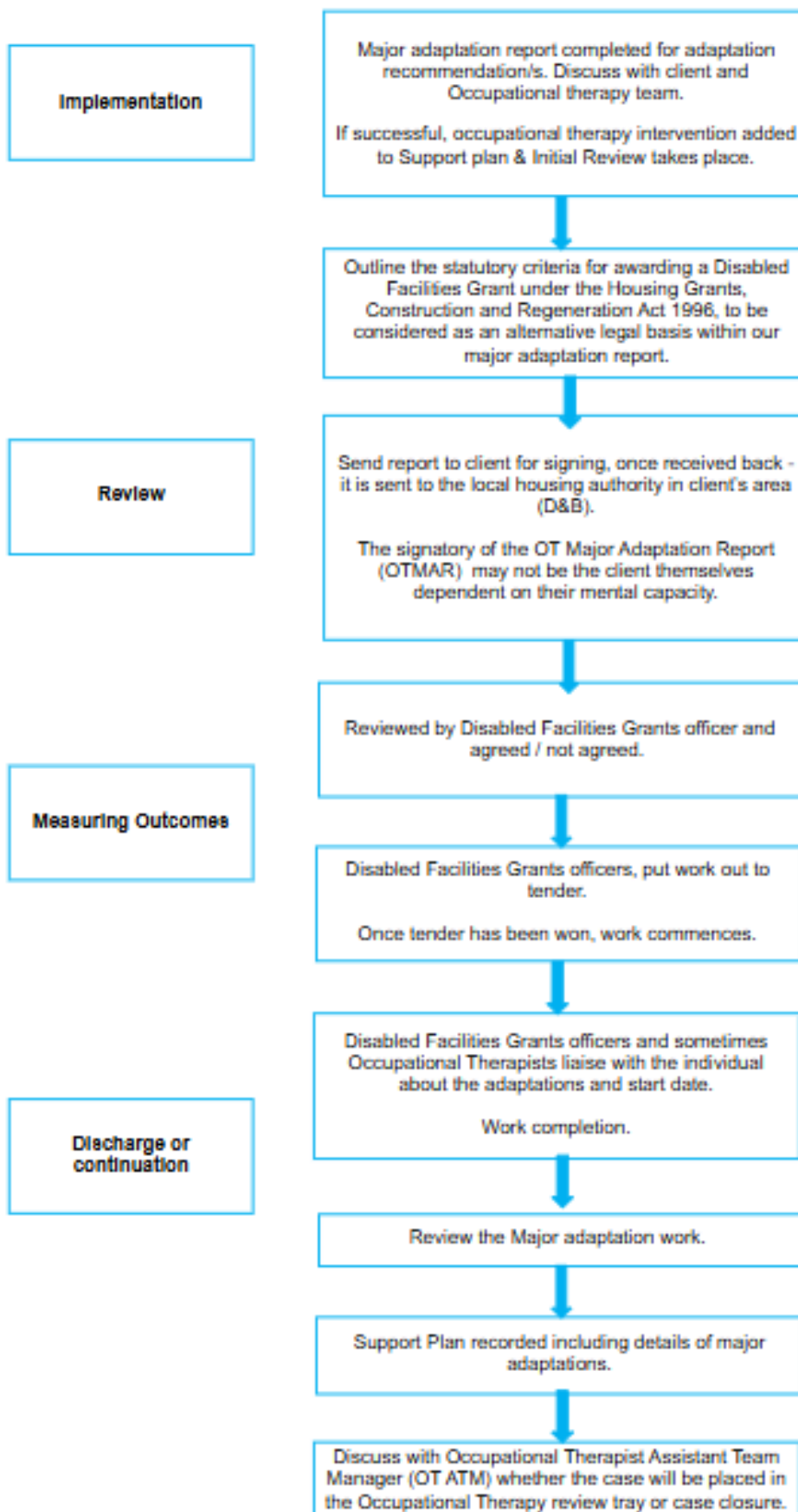
[Local Offer Introduction to the Occupational Therapy \(OT\) service - Surrey County Council](#)

[Who is the Transition Team and how they support someone preparing for adulthood - Surrey County Council](#)

Surrey OT Process:



Surrey OT Processes continued:



Surrey County Council 5 step model (Programme rolled out across Adult Social Care)

The 5 Steps Model is a cultural change for service provision in Adult Social Care (ASC). Setting Occupational Therapists (OTs) free from institutional thinking, it is underpinned by clinical judgement. Through the unique OT practice of Activity Analysis, every decision is rooted in critical thinking by gathering qualitative information and weighing up possible intervention in a person-centred way. The 5 Steps Model upholds the Care Act Principles as it cultivates a partnership of combining people's strengths and resources with OT skills and knowledge, empowering people with choice and control and resulting in a confident and competent OT workforce.

Step 1: Signposting.

Services claim to signpost while still placing most people on a waiting list. Waiting lists elevate the cost of stress and anxiety and prolong unmanaged risk. By implementing the 5 Steps Model, skilled, honest and transparent conversations, present options to people based on their individual circumstances and needs. People then have choice and control to choose a pathway best suited for them. Historically, ASC would complete emergency visits to manage people's immediate risks and fill the gap created by NHS capacity issues. As a result, people missed an essential window of rehab, which lead to deconditioning. A study found that for people above 80 years of age, 10 days in bed is the equivalent of 10 years in muscle aging. Therefore, past reactive practice, however noble, had a detrimental on people's long-term needs and outcomes. The 5 Steps Model conversations focus on establishing which service is the best placed to meet people's short and long-term needs.

Step 2: Order equipment from duty – at the point of contact.

Step 2 requires acquiring the skill of asking the right questions to enable OTs to see by hearing. Through application of clinical judgement and critical thinking, OTs become confident and competent to meet people's needs through Step 2, rather than making people wait for months while their function and confidence decline. Through positive risk taking, people's real risk of harm is reduced.

Step 3: EQuip, Photos, Virtual Assessments.

If unable to implement Steps 1 or 2 due to a lack of essential environmental information, Step 3 is initiated. Step 3 presents tools for people to provide OTs with additional information to go back to Step 1 and 2. EQuip Notebook

guides people to do measurements which may be essential for equipment provision. It also acts as a prompt to ensure people's needs are met in one go. EQuip can also serve as a self-referral document. For example, instead of referring to ASC OT, hospital OTs save time by giving the EQuip to people who can then complete the document in their own time and sent it to OT.

Step 4: MeAssured (MeA) Clinic/Smart Working OT (SWOT) Service.

Step 4 is a 'quick stop' between meeting people's needs in a time efficient and proportionate manner on duty and the longer waiting times for a full OT assessment. At MeA, up to 12 people can be assessed by an OT Assistant. SWOT enables on the spot assessments and reviews for people who may not engage with the previous steps in the duty process, e.g. for people with hoarding tendencies, etc.

Step 5: Allocations for face-to-face visits.

Step 5 is a face-to-face assessment for individuals whose needs cannot be met in another way. It indicates complexities and risk factors of the person's environment, needs and care which requires physical assessment, support, trial of equipment and observation.

It is at step 5 is where the assessment for a major adaptation/ Housing Needs Assessments would take place.

To note:

Due to the specific needs of individuals supported by the Learning Disabilities & Autism (LD&A) and Transition teams, the standard five-step Occupational Therapy (OT) is not currently implemented.

Communication and engagement challenges often present barriers to applying this structured approach in full.

Instead, both teams adopt a strength-based model within their duty processes, focusing on signposting, prescribing, and replacing equipment where appropriate. The equipment workbook is used occasionally, depending on the circumstances.

Foundations

Foundations are the national body for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs), and Home Improvement Agencies as contracted by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

At Foundations, we support local authorities and home improvement agencies across England to deliver better home adaptations. Our role is to simplify complex processes, share practical solutions, and help you make a real difference to people's lives.

Foundations help local authorities and home improvement agencies with clear, practical guidance to tackle challenges and improve services. Offering advice and support from simple one-off questions to facilitating service improvement workshops.

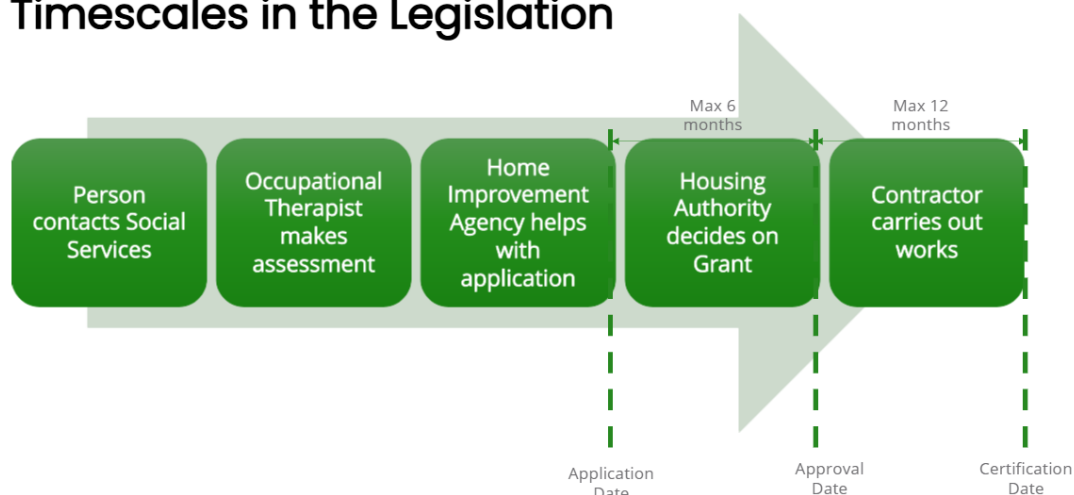
Foundations offer learning and development with training courses and Foundations LIVE (up to date latest sector news, insights and innovations).

Consultancy –

Deep dive into DFG reviews. Policy development & drafting.

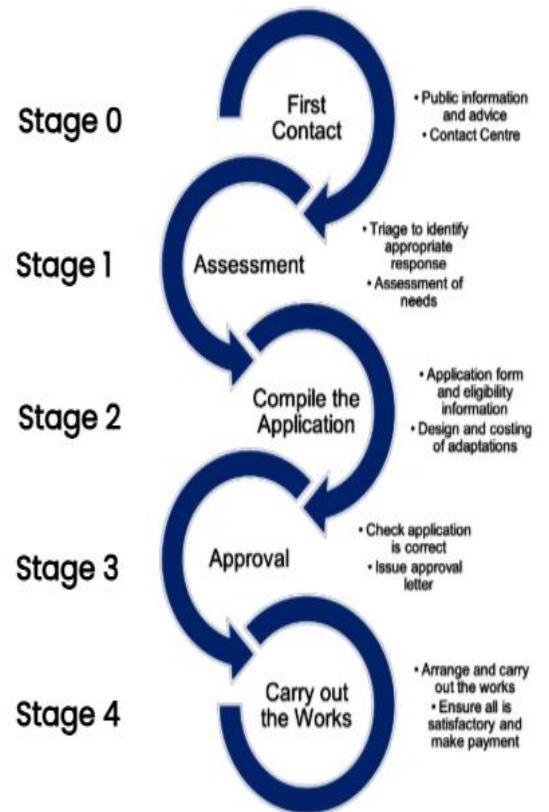
- [Guides developed by Foundations](#)
- [AdaptMyHome](#)
- [Comprehensive Analysis of Housing Adaptation Policies in 2024](#)
- [Learn More About Handyperson Services](#)
- [DFG Champions Roadshows Return for 2025](#)
- [Sample Disabled Facilities Grant \(DFG\) Webpage Template for Local Authorities](#)

Timescales in the Legislation



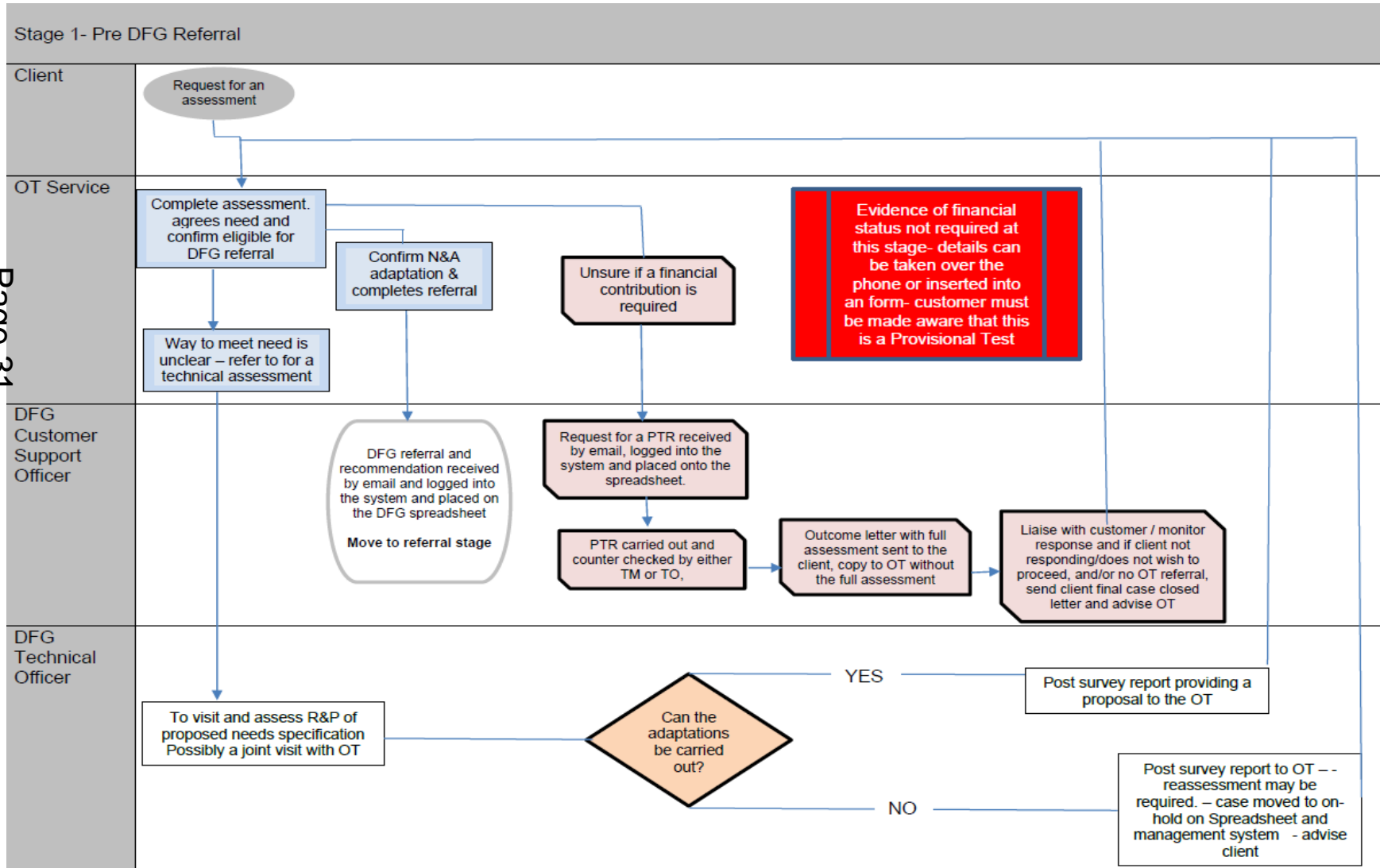
The 5 Stages of DFG

Type	Target timescales (working days)				
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Total
Urgent & Simple	5	25	5	20	55
Non-urgent & Simple	20	50	20	40	130
Urgent & Complex	20	45	5	60	130
Non-urgent & Complex	35	55	20	80	180



Pre DFG Referral

Page 31



- Definitions:
- N&A – Necessary and Appropriate
 - PTR – This is a technical performance requirement (specifications for adaptations)
 - R&P – Reasonable and Practicable

Snapshot of variances between District and Boroughs (pages 16-20)

We requested some information from Surrey's District and Boroughs via a Microsoft form, to get an understanding of the differences of waitlist times, how many of the officers trusted assessor trained, how many tenders each District and Boroughs go out for, means testing (what is and isn't means tested), what happens when the DFG is likely to go over the £30k threshold, any other uses for the DFG budget, how many Occupational therapists they use within their team or privately, and do they communicate the report to the Surrey County Council's Occupational therapists.

This form then collated the data and captured in an excel spreadsheet, simplified on the table below.

The form: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/YWDB81Aidr>

To note: DFGs are completed with capital funding, Adult Social Care does not hold capital funding for this purpose.

Also to note: Most D&Bs have Handyperson services for minor works and equipment. Requests do not always need to go via Millbrook.

District and/or Borough	How Many OT's do you have ?	What is the average wait time for the client, from the point of referral sent by an OT?	Trusted Assessor Training ?	Other DFG Uses?	How many quotes for Tender?	What happens for an over £30k Case?	Spec Sent to OT?	Private OT Reports?	Private OT Report Process?	OT Follow-up?
D&B 1	0	No wait list; immediate pick-up.	Yes	None	2 generally; 3 if >£30k.	Means tested discretionary top-up; other statutory funders approached.	Yes	None	Rarely received	Yes, especially for complex cases
D&B 2	0	3-month wait for surveyor; HIA visit within 4 weeks.	No	None	1 (<£5k), 2 (£5–10k), 3 (>£10k).	Assessed by care team manager; discretionary DFG may apply.	Yes	None	Accepted, preferably via SCC.	Yes
D&B 3	1 funded in locality team	235	Yes	None	2 (<£10k), 3 (>£10k).	HIA forms; assessed with OT; discretionary grant considered.	Yes	Funded OT in team	N/A	Yes, throughout

Snapshot of differences between Districts and Boroughs

D&B 4	0	Not specified; clarification requested on which stage.	No	None	Usually three; two allowed with justification ; one for highly specific items.	Max grant £55,000; top-up from SCC (for children); adults rarely exceed limit.	Yes	None	Must go through Council for funding approval.	Yes
D&B 5	0	Currently no waiting list	Yes	Yes – DFG is only one use of better care funding. We have other statutory duties to fulfil with this funding.	Minimum two; exceptions for specialist products	Means-tested discretionary top-up; other statutory funders approached	Yes – we have a duty to consult	Yes, cost can be included in the grant.	Yes, it can be included, in the grant.	Yes – we do not plan to end this practice under the five-step programme
D&B 6	1	Average 213 days (from enquiry to completion) but no “waiting list” as such	Yes	None	1–2 for basic; 2+ for higher value	Ask Social Services for top-up; otherwise, client funds	Yes	None	It can be accepted if it contains what we need	Not by Surrey OTs
D&B 7	0	Immediate pick-up and contacted within 1 week.	Yes	None	3	D&B 7 for adults, SCC for children, or resident contribution	Yes	None	Not applicable	Yes (SCC OT)

Snapshot of differences between Districts and Boroughs

D&B 8	0	131 days	Yes	Digital technology in homes	3 (via Intend, pre-agreed basket rates)	Full project management, admin, surveying	Yes	None	Not used	Yes (SCC OT) Yes, close collaboration with OT teams
D&B 9	0	2–6 months	Yes	No	3 (2 accepted if justified; 3 required for extensions)	Only for extensions or garage conversions	No	None (residents pay if they want to speed up)	Sent to HIA inbox	Notified ASC for review
D&B 10	2 part time	Panel decision: 1 week Case worker visit: 2 weeks Surveyor visit: 2–4 weeks	Yes	Survey costs, private OT assessments (not community projects)	3	Rare – 1 in 2023–24, none in 2024–25	Yes	11 in 2024–25	Via online portal with email notification	The Weekly panel reviews all new cases.
D&B 11	0	Panel decision: 1 week Case worker visit: 2 weeks	Yes	Survey costs, private OT assessments (not	3	Rare – 1 in 2023–24, none in 2024–25	Yes	103 in 2024–25	Via online portal with email notification	

Snapshot of differences between Districts and Boroughs

		Surveyor visit: 2–4 weeks		community projects)							
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Housing Policy Mapping

**A snapshot of the variance
of adaption criteria housing
policy per District and
Borough.**

Policy Map – Means Tested adaptations (N/A for Children)

(Pages 23-25)

District and/or Borough	Stairlifts	Level Access Showers	Wash Dry Toilets	Ramps	Grab Rails	Wider Doors	Bespoke Home Extension	Heating Systems	Telecare/Tech	Ceiling Track Hoist	Through floor lifts	Notes
D&B 1		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	All mandatory adaptations except for stairlifts are means tested. Some discretionary grants are not means tested.
D&B 2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	All adaptations are means tested.
D&B 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Means testing only when there are multiple needs. Ceiling track hoists are installed via CES, under types of assistance. D&B 3 also has a handy person service.
D&B 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	All adaptations are means tested.
D&B 5	Means tested when discretion	✓	✓	Means tested when discretion	Given FOC via handy person until	✓	✓	✓	Capital expenditure only	These are funded via CES	✓	All mandatory DFGs are means tested. A mandatory DFG

	ary budget runs out			onary funding runs out	funding runs out							must be awarded if applicant meets legal criteria. It can cover any adaption over £1000.
D&B 6	✓	✓	✓	✓	Via Handy person service	✓	✓	Only if eligible under DFG	Only if eligible under DFG	Installed via CES	✓	May be eligible for works up to £15,000 per property without means test.
D&B 7			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Everything except for a standard stairlift and standard level access shower is means tested.
D&B 8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Applicants may be means tested for adaptation costs, with possible waivers at the Council's discretion based on age, illness, or financial hardship.
D&B 9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Everything is means tested.
D&B 10		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	Installed via CES	✓	Bathroom adaptations, through floor lifts, extensions and step lifts are means tested only.
D&B 11		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	Installed via CES	✓	Bathroom adaptations, through floor lifts, extensions and

													step lifts are means tested only.
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Other adaptations such as kitchens and step lifts can also be considered.

Policy Map - Minor or Major Adaptations

District and/or Borough	Minor	Major
D&B 1	Any minor adaptations and improvements are processed via the Handy Person Service or a discretionary grant.	All adaptations put through via DFG.
D&B 2	Minor is up to £2000.	Major above £2000.
D&B 3	Usually cost less than £1000.	Over £1000.
D&B 4	Not formally defined. Indicatively, works under £1,000 may be considered minor, though these are typically addressed via CES rather than DFG. Safe & Secure Grants and HPS are not classified as minor works.	Not formally defined. Generally, works over £1,000 may be considered major, and more likely to be eligible for DFG, though this is not a strict threshold.
D&B 5	Minor up to £1000.	Major anything beyond £1000.
D&B 6	Minor is any work done via Handy Person e.g. grab rails, banister rails, half steps etc.	Major are ramps, stairlifts, wet floor showers, through floor lifts etc.
D&B 7	Minor is up to £2000 per property.	Anything over £2000.
D&B 8	Maximum grant £5000 plus VAT.	Anything above £6000.
D&B 9	Minor is any work done via Handy Person e.g. grab rails, banister rails, half steps etc.	Major are ramps, stairlifts, wet floor showers, through floor lifts etc.
D&B 10	Grab rails, external rails to paths, small ramps, banister rails, half steps, lever taps.	Larger adaptations, wet rooms, stairlifts, through floor lifts, extensions.
D&B 11	Grab rails, external rails to paths, small ramps, banister rails, half steps, lever taps.	Larger adaptations, wet rooms, stairlifts, through floor lifts, extensions.

Examples of Good Practice/ Case Studies:

District and Borough	Link to Examples of Good Practice/ Case Studies
D&B 1	(CASE STUDIES FROM DISTRICT 1 EMBEDDED HERE)
D&B 2	(CASE STUDIES FROM DISTRICT 2 EMBEDDED HERE)
D&B 3	(CASE STUDIES FROM DISTRICT 3 EMBEDDED HERE)
D&B 4	(CASE STUDIES FROM DISTRICT 4 EMBEDDED HERE)
D&B 5	(CASE STUDIES FROM DISTRICT 5 EMBEDDED HERE)
D&B 6	(CASE STUDIES FROM DISTRICT 6 EMBEDDED HERE)
D&B 7	(CASE STUDIES FROM DISTRICT 7 EMBEDDED HERE)
D&B 8	(CASE STUDIES FROM DISTRICT 8 EMBEDDED HERE)
D&B 9	(CASE STUDIES FROM DISTRICT 9 EMBEDDED HERE)
D&B 10	(CASE STUDIES FROM DISTRICT 10 EMBEDDED HERE)
D&B 11	(CASE STUDIES FROM DISTRICT 11 EMBEDDED HERE)

Housing Policy Comparison table:

This sets out the legislative bases for each policy, the types of assistance available per D&B, policy aims and eligibility.

Pages 30-32

District and/or Borough	Legislative Basis	Types of Assistance	Policy Aims	Eligibility	Means Testing
D&B 1	Housing Grants Act 1996; Regulatory Reform Order 2002	Mandatory DFGs, Discretionary Home Adaptation & Improvement Assistance, Handyperson Service	To remain safe and independent at home and to improve the health and wellbeing of the resident	Homeowners/tenants, main residence, OT recommendation	Yes (where applicable as per D&B 1 Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy)
D&B 2	Housing Grants Act 1996; Regulatory Reform Order 2002	Mandatory DFGs, Discretionary Grants (e.g., Safe at Home, Energy Efficiency), Home Improvement Loan	Support independence, remedy hazards, improve safety	Homeowners/tenants, main residence, OT recommendation	Yes
D&B 3	Housing Grants Act 1996; Regulatory Reform Order 2002	DFGs, Safe and Secure Grants	Broader discretionary support, help those unable to contribute financially	Homeowners, tenants, landlords with disabled tenants, OT recommendation	Yes (except for children)
D&B 4	Housing Grants Act 1996; Regulatory Reform Order 2002	Mandatory & Discretionary DFGs, Small Works Loans/Grants, Safe & Secure Grants, Handy Person Service	Support independence, safety, and health	Homeowners/tenants, main residence, OT recommendation	Yes (except for children)
D&B 5	Housing Grants Act 1996; Regulatory Reform Order 2002	Mandatory DFGs, Discretionary financial assistance and loans	Support independence, reduce accidents, ease pressure on services, improve incidents of disrepair in private sector homes	Not a person from abroad, have a legal interest in the property (owner [includes landlords], private or housing association tenants or be a licence holder [mobile homes])	Yes (except for children)
D&B 6	Housing Grants Act 1996; Regulatory Reform Order 2002	Mandatory DFGs, locally funded discretionary assistance (if funding available).	Support mental health, reduce isolation, empower independence.	Homeowners/private or housing association tenants, main residence, OT recommendation	Yes

Housing Policy Comparison Table

D&B 7	Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996; Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 200	Mandatory DFGs (up to £30,000) - Aids and Adaptations Grant (up to £2,000, non-means tested) - Top-Up Grant (up to £15,000 over DFG limit) - Community Equipment Store - Handy Person Service (Home Link)	- Enable independent living - Reduce hospitalisation - Provide decent, healthy, and safe housing - Fast-track urgent adaptations	Owner or tenant - Main residence - UK citizen - Intend to live in the property for 5+ years - OT assessment required for most grants	- Mandatory DFGs are means tested - Exemptions: standard stairlift, level access shower, disabled children, MND, palliative/end-of-life cases - Aids and Adaptations Grant: non-means tested
D&B 8	Housing Grants Act 1996; Regulatory Reform Order 2002	DFGs, Handyperson Service	Assist low-income/elderly/disabled, support hospital discharge, improve energy efficiency	Homeowners/tenants (including private, local authority, social housing), OT recommendation	Yes
D&B 9	Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996; Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002	Mandatory DFGs (up to £30,000) - Discretionary grants for home adaptations - Fast-track funding for stairlifts - Top-up funding for major adaptations - Handyperson service - Community Equipment Service (e.g., hoists, ramps)	- Promote independence and reduce care costs - Prevent hospital admissions and support discharge - Improve health and wellbeing - Enable residents to remain in their homes - Align with Better Care Fund outcomes	All housing tenures (owners, private and social tenants) - All ages - Must meet criteria for disability or vulnerability - OT assessment required for DFGs	- Mandatory DFGs are means tested - Discretionary grants subject to funding availability - All adaptations means-tested
D&B 10	Housing Grants Act 1996; Regulatory Reform Order 2002	Mandatory & Discretionary DFGs, Prevention grants, Relocation grants, Handy Person Service. Home Improvement assistance	Reduce illness/injury risk, support independence, improve living conditions	Homeowners/tenants, main residence, OT recommendation	Yes, except children and prevention grants (inc. stairlifts & ramps)
D&B 11	Housing Grants Act 1996; Regulatory	Grants and loans for repairs, improvements, adaptations	Reduce illness/injury risk, support independence, improve living conditions	Homeowners/tenants, main residence, OT recommendation	Yes, except children and prevention grants

Housing Policy Comparison Table

	Reform Order 2002				(inc stairlifts & ramps)
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To note: Dependent on whether the client lives in privately owned property, council property, housing association or privately rented alternative routes to DFG may be considered such as moving property or other grants.

Glossary:

General definitions:

BCF – Better Care Fund

D&B – Districts and Boroughs

DFG – Disabled Facilities Grant

OT – Occupational Therapist

OT ATM – Occupational Therapist Assistant Team Manager

[Useful terminology and language | RCOT](#)

[Definitions from page 15:](#)

N&A – Necessary and Appropriate

PTR – This is a technical performance requirement (specifications for adaptations)

R&P – Reasonable and Practicable

Acknowledgements

Authors	Title	Organisation
	Senior Business Manager Better Care Fund	Surrey County Council
	Occupational Therapy Apprentice	Surrey County Council
	Senior Practitioner Specialist Lead	Surrey County Council
Contributors	Title	Organisation
	Occupational Therapist Service Lead/ Principal OT	Surrey County Council
	Team Manager - 5 Step Programme Lead	Surrey County Council
	Regional Advisor	Foundations
	Career Development Lead	Surrey County Council
	Senior Programme Manager – Better Care Fund	Surrey County Council
District and Borough Colleagues		District/ Borough
	Living Well Manager (Homelink and Support	D&B 6 Borough Council
	Community Services Manager	D&B 8 Borough Council
	Principal Housing Grants Officer	D&B 1 Borough Council
	Corporate Deputy Head of Community Services	D&B 8 Borough Council
	Housing, Resettlement and Communities Manager	D&B 9
	Head of Living Well Community Services	D&B 6 Borough Council
	Joint Group Head Community Wellbeing, D&B 7 BC	D&B 7 Borough Council
	Strategic Lead Independent Living	D&B 7 Borough Council
	CARE Team Manager	D&B 2 Borough Council
	DFG & Assisted Living Officer	D&B 7 Borough Council
	Grants and Adaptions Manager	D&B 5 District Council
	Environmental Health Manager	D&B 4 Borough Council
	D&B 10& D&B 11 Care and Repair Manager	D&B 10and D&B 11 Borough Council(s)
	Compliance Team Lader Environmental Health and Licensing	D&B 3 District Council
	Senior Operations Manager, Independent Living	D&B 7 Borough Council

	Interim Joint Grants & Adaptations Manager	D&B 11 Borough Council
	Interim Joint Grants & Adaptations Manager	D&B 10 Borough Council
	Housing Business and Finance Team Manager	D&B 9 Borough Council
Occupational Therapist Managers/ Assistant Team Managers	Title	SCC Locality Team
	Occupational Therapist Assistant Team Manager	D&B 10 Locality Team
	Assistant Team Manager Occupational Therapist Advanced Practitioner	Transitions Specialist Team
	Occupational Therapist Team Manager	Learning Disability & Autism Specialist
	Occupational Therapist Assistant Team Manager	D&B 11 Locality Team
	Occupational Therapist Team Manager	D&B 4 Locality Team
	Occupational Therapist Assistant Team Manager	D&B 2 Locality Team
	Assistant Team Manager (Advanced Practitioner)	People with Learning Disabilities & Autism & Transition Area
	Occupational Therapist Assistant Team Manager	D&B 7 Locality Team
	Occupational Therapist Assistant Team Manager	D&B 8 Locality Team
	Occupational Therapist Assistant Team Manager	D&B 5 Locality Team
	Assistant Team Manager (Advanced Practitioner)	People with Learning Disabilities & Autism East
	Occupational Therapist Assistant Team Manager	D&B 6 Locality Team
	Occupational Therapist Assistant Team Manager	D&B 9 Locality Team
	Occupational Therapist Assistant Team Manager	D&B 8 Locality Team
	Senior Practice Lead Mental Health	Enabling Independence Service

Appendix:

Housing Policies Per District and Borough:

District and Borough	Link to Housing Policy
D&B 1	<u>LINK TO D&B HOUSING POLICY</u>
D&B 2	<u>LINK TO D&B HOUSING POLICY</u>
D&B 3	<u>LINK TO D&B HOUSING POLICY</u>
D&B 4	<u>LINK TO D&B HOUSING POLICY</u>
D&B 5	<u>LINK TO D&B HOUSING POLICY</u>
D&B 6	<u>LINK TO D&B HOUSING POLICY</u>
D&B 7	<u>LINK TO D&B HOUSING POLICY</u>
D&B 8	<u>LINK TO D&B HOUSING POLICY</u>
D&B 9	<u>LINK TO D&B HOUSING POLICY</u>
D&B 10	<u>LINK TO D&B HOUSING POLICY</u>
D&B 11	<u>LINK TO D&B HOUSING POLICY</u>

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Appendix 3

Spelthorne's Ageing Population and Accessibility Needs

Spelthorne's ageing population has increased pressure on housing suitability and support services, Census data shows that 18% of residents are over the age of 65 with 14% being over 70. This has increased demand for downsizing options, accessible housing and support to remain independent, this has led to demand for more hospital discharge accommodation and for adaptations and mobility related interventions. This then creates demand for occupational therapy referrals and ultimately places pressure on limited DFG budgets.

The reintroduction of means testing for Level Access Showers (LAS) within the (DFG) framework needs to be considered within the wider demographic, health and socio-economic context of Spelthorne. Whilst the proposal supports the long-term financial sustainability of the adaptations service and aligns with the statutory DFG framework under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, there are wider implications for health inequality, preventative healthcare and independent living outcomes that require careful consideration.

Further evidence from the Census demonstrates that 14.4 % of residents reported some level of disability with 5.7% reporting that their day to day activities were 'limited a lot'.

Level access showers are widely recognised as both preventative and enabling adaptations and they reduce slips, trips and falls within the home environment. Slips, trips and falls are a major contributor to hospital admissions amongst older adults. So, the re application for means testing these adaptations may have wider implications if households delay or decline adaptations due to financial contribution requirements.

Although Spelthorne performs relatively well based on national indicators, the borough contains pockets of hidden deprivation and health inequalities. Some neighbourhoods record substantially higher disability prevalence than borough averages. With borough wide averages obscuring local concentrations of poor health and disability with low-income households who may then be disproportionately affected by the reinstatement of financial contributions.

The wider housing market in Spelthorne also creates additional challenges with high housing costs relative to income. As a result, there is a significant number of owner occupiers who are asset rich, but income limited, particularly older owner occupiers, who may fall within the means tested contribution thresholds despite having limited disposable income to fund adaptations. The reintroduction of the means test could create some behaviour change with these residents possibly leading to a deferral of works or seeking cheaper interim solutions.

This committee report seeks to balance these considerations against the need to ensure the finite DFG resources remain targeted towards households with the greatest financial need. Offering the Council a proposal that supports the equitable resource allocation where demands are exceeding available funding.