

Disabled Facilities Grant - Contractors Guide

North Norfolk District Council is the responsible organisation for providing Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for the North Norfolk area. The Council will only consider an application for a DFG where the needs of the applicant have been assessed by the Social Services authority (for North Norfolk this is Norfolk County Council) and where a formal recommendation to undertake adaptations has been received. The grant will only cover the recommended adaptations.

Quotes

The Council requires that DFG applicants obtain 2 quotes for works up to £5,000 and 3 quotes for works over £5,000 (this may be different to other Councils). The Council will provide an itemised schedule of works to the applicant and the applicant should provide this to the contractor who should provide an itemised quote in accordance with the schedule.

If the applicant asks the contractor to quote for works not included in the schedule these should be provided in a separate quote. These will not be covered by the grant.

If the contractor believes that additional works are required they should detail these in a separate quote with reasons as to why they believe the additional work is required.

The Council will consider all of the quotes. If there are any queries on the quotes the Council will contact the contractor to provide clarification.

The quote should include the name of the contractor, a company stamp or covering letter on company headed paper, an estimate of the amount of time between the contract being awarded and the start date, the length of time to undertake the works and the date the quote expires. The quotes should include VAT (where the company is registered for VAT) at the appropriate rate. Some works for the benefit of the disabled will be exempt from VAT or may attract a reduced rate of VAT, the Council can advise.

If the quotes are not competitive the Council will require the applicant to obtain further quotes and the quotes provided will be discounted. The Council may also discount a quote provided by a contractor with a poor track record.

If the applicant struggles to find contractors willing to quote the Council will refer the applicant to the Norfolk Trusted Trader or Build Norfolk online directories managed by Norfolk County Council Trading Standards, which can be accessed at www.norfolk.gov.uk/trustedtrader and www.buildnorfolk.co.uk. We would strongly encourage contractors to apply to be included in the directory.

The Council will normally approve the grant based upon the lowest quote. The applicant can choose to use another contractor who provided a quote and pay the difference themselves. If they wish to use a different contractor the applicant must get consent from the Council in advance.

The successful contractor may want to request sight of the approval letter from the applicant.

Undertaking the work

The contract for undertaking the work is between the applicant and the contractor. The contractor is undertaking the work for the applicant and therefore should take instruction from the applicant. The Council will inspect the work on completion to ensure that it has been undertaken in accordance with the schedule of works and to a satisfactory standard. It is advised that the contractor be present at the completion inspection. If the work has not been completed to the satisfaction of the Council the contractor will be advised of what needs to be done to rectify this. The Council will require the applicant to confirm that the works have been completed to their satisfaction before the grant will be paid.

The Council will not take any responsibility for the work of the contractor or intervene to solve any problems. We would therefore advise that the contractor has a complaints process which can be used by the applicant if necessary.

It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure that all certificates and warranties are provided to the client. If the applicant experiences any problems with the work and is unable to resolve the issue with the contractor we would advise them to take legal action or contact Norfolk Trading Standards.

Unforeseen works

The Council will not include contingencies in the grant but will consider increasing the grant to cover unforeseen works if they are required. The contractor should alert the applicant to any issues that arise where further works are required and the applicant should then contact the Council to seek approval for the additional works. In some circumstances the Council may need to visit the site before approval can be given and may need a written quote from the contractor. Approval cannot be given for work that has already been undertaken.

Payment

Payment will be made upon satisfactory completion of the work and on receipt of a satisfactory invoice. The invoice should be addressed to the applicant and given to the applicant unless they request that you send it to the Council. The grant will be paid to the applicant unless they request that it is paid direct to the contractor. The Council may pay the contractor direct providing that it has told the applicant that it will do this at the outset. The Council issues cheques on a weekly basis and payment will take between 4 and 10 days depending upon when in the weekly cycle the request for payment is made.

The maximum grant is £30,000. If the cost of the works exceeds this the difference will need to be met by the applicant. In certain circumstances the Social Services authority will agree to meet the difference or the Council may provide a Disabled Facilities Grant loan to cover the difference. The grant is means tested and the applicant may have a contribution to make.

It is essential that the contractor understands that the applicant will be responsible for payment for the work and that the Council will provide a grant as detailed on the grant approval letter provided that all of the conditions of the grant are met. If the conditions of the grant are not met the Council could withhold payment of all or some of the grant. It is essential therefore that the contractor works with the applicant to ensure that the grant conditions are met.

The grant approval is valid for a period of 12 months. The Council cannot guarantee that the grant will be paid if the work is not completed within the 12 month period. The Council may agree to extend the 12 month period if necessary and if it has sufficient budget to meet its outstanding commitments.

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