



Peterborough City Council

Housing Renewal Policy

2017 - 2019

23rd November 2016

Contents	Page
Chapter 1	
The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002	3
The Purpose & Scope of this document	3
Commencement & transitional arrangements	3
National Context	4
Local Context	7
Type of Assistance Available	11
Chapter 2	
Repair Assistance	12
Energy Company Obligation	16
Chapter 3	
Repairs Assistance to Private Landlords & Private Leasing Scheme	18
Chapter 4	
Empty Homes Assistance & Private Leasing Scheme	20
Chapter 5	
Disabled Persons Relocation Grant	22
Chapter 6	
Mandatory Disabled Facility Grants	24
Chapter 7	
Discretionary Disabled Facility Grants	33
Chapter 8	
Conditions, Repayment & Exemptions	35
Chapter 9	
Other Matters	39

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) (Order 2002

- 1.1.1 Article 3 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 gives local authorities the power to provide assistance (either directly or indirectly) to any person for the purpose of improving living conditions in the local authority area.
- 1.1.2 Paragraph (3) of article 3 allows assistance to be provided in any form.
- 1.1.3 The Order provides that the power may be exercised subject to certain qualifications detailed in article 3.
- 1.1.4 Paragraph (4) of article 3 gives local housing authorities the power to make assistance subject to certain conditions, including making repayment or a contribution.
- 1.1.5 Article 4 of the Order prevents local housing authorities from exercising their article 3 power unless they have adopted a policy for the provision of assistance under that article and given publicity to the policy and act in accordance with it.
- 1.1.6 Article 11 of the Order makes amendments to the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Order.

1.2 The purpose and scope of this document

- 1.2.1 In accordance with article 4 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002, this document sets out in full the policy that has been adopted by Peterborough City Council, and includes details of –
 - (a) how the Council intends to exercise its article 3 powers and ensure that the statutory qualifications to that power are observed;
 - (a) the types of assistance the Council may make available;
 - (a) the circumstances in which persons will be eligible for assistance;
 - (a) how the amount of any assistance awarded will be calculated;
 - (a) the conditions that will apply to the provision of assistance;
 - (a) how and in what circumstances any assistance made may be repaid.

1.3 Commencement and transitional arrangements

- 1.3.1 This revised policy shall have effect from 1st January 2017.
- 1.3.2 From 1st January 2017 a valid application for assistance made under a power derived under article 3 of the Order will be determined under the provisions of the policy described in this document.

1.4 NATIONAL CONTEXT

1.4.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) English Housing Survey 2014 – 2015 stated:

- Of the estimated 22.5 million household in England in 2014-15, 14.3 million (65%) were owner occupied. 4.3 million (19%) household were privately renting and 3.9 million (17%) household lived in the social rented sector
- In 2014 4.6 million homes failed to meet the decent homes standard. The private rented sector had the highest proportion of non-decent homes (20%). 19% of owner occupied home failed to meet the decent homes standard
- The energy efficiency of English housing stock has continued to improve and in 2014 the average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating was 61 (out of 100) compared to 45 in 1996.

1.4.2 The Housing Act 2004 brought about changes to the way in which properties are assessed and has replaced the former system based on the test of fitness for human habitation. The Housing Health & Safety Rating System [HHSRS] assessment process incorporates a full inspection of the residential premises to identify any deficiencies. The inspecting officer will judge whether the deficiencies mean that there are any hazards that are significantly worse than the average for residential premises of that age and type. The inspecting officer then assesses the likelihood of an occurrence that could cause harm over the next twelve months and the severity of the outcomes from such an occurrence.

1.4.3 A hazard is a situation where there is risk of harm. The hazards assessed by the inspecting officer are:

- Damp and mould growth – exposure to dust mites, damp, mould or fungal growth
- Excess cold – exposure to low temperatures
- Excess heat – exposure to high temperatures
- Exposure to asbestos & manufactured mineral fibres
- Biocides – exposure to chemicals used to treat timber and mould growth
- Carbon Monoxide and fuel combustion products – exposure to carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and smoke
- Ingestion of lead
- Exposure to radiation
- Exposure to uncombusted fuel gas
- Exposure to volatile organic compounds
- A lack of adequate space for living and sleeping
- Difficulty in keeping the dwelling secure against unauthorised entry
- A lack of adequate lighting
- Exposure to noise
- Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse – poor design, layout or construction such that the dwelling cannot readily be kept clean, exposure to pests; an adequate provision for the hygienic storage and disposal of household waste
- Food Safety – an inadequate provision of facilities for the storage, preparation and

- cooking of food
 - Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage – an inadequate provision of facilities for maintaining good personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage
 - Water supply – an inadequate supply of water free from contamination, for drinking and other domestic purposes
 - Falls associated with toilets, baths, showers or other washing facilities
 - Falling on any level surface or falling between surfaces where the change of level is less than 300 mm
 - Falling on stairs, steps or ramps where the change of level is 300 mm or more
 - Falling between levels where the difference in levels is 300 mm or more
 - Exposure to electricity
 - Exposure to uncontrolled fire and associated smoke
 - Contact with controlled fire or flames, hot objects, liquid or vapours
 - Collision with, or entrapment of body parts in doors, windows or other architectural features
 - An explosion in the dwelling
 - The position, location and operability of amenities, fittings and equipment
 - The collapse of the whole or part of the dwelling
- 1.4.4 To allow for the comparison of the significance of the widely differing hazards, the HHSRS uses a formula to generate hazard scores. Hazards are classified as either Category 1 or Category 2.
- 1.4.5 The Housing Act 2004 imposes a duty on Local Authorities to deal with identified Category 1 hazards and a power to deal with Category 2 hazards. Providing financial assistance to lower income and vulnerable owner occupiers as well as taking appropriate and proportionate enforcement action are two ways Local Authorities may exercise that duty and power.
- 1.4.6 The Decent Homes Standard applies to both the social and private housing sectors. To meet the decent homes standard, a property must:
- (i) be free of health and safety hazards assessed as Category 1 under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System
 - (ii) be in a reasonable state of repair
 - (iii) have reasonably modern facilities (i.e. kitchen and bathroom) and
 - (iv) provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (i.e. adequate heating and insulation)
- 1.4.7 The Building Research Establishment (BRE), supported by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, published a report “The Cost of Poor Housing to the NHS” in 2010. Using BRE methodology developed for this study, it was estimated that it was costing the NHS some £600 million per annum in first year treatment costs to leave people living in the poorest housing in England (that which has a HHSRS Category 1 hazard). A later review of the methodology and data sources suggested that this figure was an underestimate and a more realistic cost to the NHS was £1.4 billion per annum for people living in the poorest 15% of housing stock in England rising to £2.0 billion when all homes with a significant HHSRS hazard was present.
- 1.4.8 A comparison was made of the costs to the NHS from other common health hazards, illustrated in Table 1.1 below:

Risk Factor	Total Cost Burden to the NHS
Physical Inactivity	£0.p - £1.0 billion
Overweight & Obesity	£5.1 - £5.2 billion
Smoking	£2.3 - £3.3 billion
Alcohol Intake	£3.2 billion
Housing	£1.4 - £2.0 billion

Table 1.1 Housing Cost to NHS compared with other common health hazards

The estimate for housing is perhaps similar to that of smoking or alcohol but programmes to educate people on the health and safety risks in their own homes are not as prevalent as these other health hazards.

1.4.9 The BRE produced a research paper “Homes and Ageing in England”, again using the methodology devised for “The Cost of Poor Housing” Report and the English Housing Survey (EHS). The key messages from this research were:

- Over one fifth of all older household groups (55 – 64, 65 – 74, over 75 and over 80) lived in a home that failed to meet the Decent Homes standard
- 780,000 households aged 55 years and over were in fuel poverty
- 1.3 million households aged 55 years and older lived in a home with at least one category 1 hazard
- The BRE estimates that, for older households aged 55 years or more, the cost of poor housing to the NHS (for first year treatment costs) is £624 million with these costs dominated by excess cold hazards and those associated with falls (on stairs and on the level)
- The proportion of older households living in a home with the four “visitability” accessibility features assessed by the English Housing Survey (level access, flush threshold, WC at entrance level and sufficiently wide doors and circulation space) ranged from 4% (aged 55 – 64 years) to 7% (aged 80 years and over). Around a fifth of homes occupied by all age groups aged 65 years and over had none of these key features and this figure was 24% for households aged 55 – 64 years. A permanent home for a person with restricted mobility requires suitable parking, downstairs living space, shower on the ground floor, wheelchair turning space, bed space on the ground floor and the entrance illuminated or covered. The research estimated that only 110,000 dwellings (0.5%) were fully accessible.

1.4.10 Disabled Facility Grants provides funding to older and disabled people in owner occupied, private rented and registered provider properties to help them make changes to their home environment. Facilities can include the installation of showers and lifts and suitable ground floor wheelchair accessible rooms in order for them to remain living in their own homes and reduce the cost of care. In 2014 the grant became part of the Better Care Fund with the aim to provide more joined-up and customer focussed services to reduce hospital admissions and expensive care packages and enable people to return from hospital more quickly.

1.4.11 In recognition of the rising need for adaptations, central government funding for the DFG has been increased from £220 million to £394 million in 2016/2017 and it is projected to increase to over £500 million by 2019/2020.

1.4.12 The Care Act 2014 focusses on prevention. Guidance states “Local authorities must provide or arrange services, resources or facilities that maximises independence for those already with such needs, for example interventions such as rehabilitation/reablement services, e.g. community equipment services and adaptations.” The guidance goes on to state “Integrated services built around an individual’s needs are often best met within the home. The suitability of living accommodation is a core component of an individual’s wellbeing and when developing integrated services, local authorities should consider the central role of housing within integration.”

1.4.13 The Public Health Outcomes Framework “Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Improving Outcomes and Supporting Transparency” (Dept of Health, 2013) sets out desired outcome for public health and how they will be measure. Many of the measurements have links to housing including falls and injuries in over 65s, Fuel Poverty and Excess Winter Deaths.

1.4.14 In 2015 there were an estimated 600,000 empty homes in England of which 200,000 were long term empty (empty for more than 6 months). Bringing empty property back into use will contribute towards the increase of the supply of available housing with the potential reduction of homelessness. This coupled with community related benefits including the enhancement of local neighbourhoods, the reduction of vandalism and anti-social behaviour and the improvement of housing standards are key to achieving the strategic priorities of the Council to improve the quality of life and the environment of its residents.

1.5 LOCAL CONTEXT

1.5.1 Peterborough is a city with huge ambitions. The vision for the city is:

“A bigger and better Peterborough that grows the right way, and through truly sustainable growth: Improves the quality of life of all its people and communities and ensures that all communities benefit from growth and the opportunities that it brings. Creates a truly sustainable Peterborough, the urban centre of a thriving sub-regional community of villages and market towns. A healthy, safe and exciting place to live, work and visit, famous as the environmental capital of the UK.”

1.5.2 The Peterborough Sustainable Communities Strategy 2008 - 2021 is the overarching strategy that guides the work of Peterborough City Council and its partners. The strategic priorities are:

- Drive growth, regeneration and economic development
- Improve educational attainment and skills
- Safeguard vulnerable children and adults
- Implement the Environment Capital agenda
- Support Peterborough’s culture and leisure trust – Vivacity
- Keep all our communities safe, cohesive and healthy
- Achieve the best health and wellbeing for the city

1.5.3 Peterborough City Council’s core values guide the way we treat our customers, partners

and each other:

- Expertise – we recognise and value the differences, skills, knowledge and experience of all our colleagues
- Trust – we are honest and open in all our dealings and deliver on our promises
- Initiative – we are proactive and use our creativity to identify and resolve problems
- Customer Focused – we understand and aim to meet our customers diverse needs, treating them fairly and with respect
- Work together/One Team – we work with colleagues and partners to deliver the best services possible

1.5.4 This Policy has been informed by the Building Research Establishment's (BRE) Peterborough Dwelling Level Stock Modelling Report dated July 2015 and will be part of the Housing Strategy 2016 – 2021 which sets out the vision for housing across the authority. With safe, warm and good quality housing, the residents of the City can achieve good health, good employment and good educational attainment for their children. Good quality housing is fundamental to the Council's vision and to achieving the key priorities for the Authority.

Peterborough's Private Sector Housing - Stock Condition

1.5.5 There are approximately 82,695 dwellings in the city, of which 66,414 are in the private sector. The private sector figure can be further broken down to 49,956 owner occupied properties and 16,458 privately rented. The remainder is made up of 16,281 social stock properties.

1.5.6 As part of Peterborough's legal duty to regularly review the condition of its housing, Peterborough City Council commissioned the BRE to undertake a series of modelling exercises on the housing stock which required the BRE to produce an integrated stock model which includes Energy Performance (EPC), Local Land & Property Gazetteer (LLPG) and vacant property data provided by the Council. The BRE produced a Stock Modelling Report of their findings and supplied the Council with a database to enable the Council to obtain specific information whenever required.

1.5.7 The key findings of this stock modelling are detailed in Tables 1.2 and 1.3 below

Indicator	All Stock				Private Sector Stock			
	P'boro No	P'boro %	2011 EHS Regional %	2011 EHS England %	P'boro No	P'boro %	2011 EHS Regional %	2011 EHS England %
No of dwellings	82,695	-	-	-	66,414	-	-	-
All Cat 1 hazards	8,937	11%	17%	15%	7,952	12%	19%	17%
Excess Cold	2,522	3%	7%	6%	2,286	3%	8%	7%
Falls	7,414	9%	10%	9%	6,714	10%	11%	10%
Disrepair	2,123	3%	3%	5%	1,978	3%	3%	6%
*Fuel Poverty 10%	12,019	15%	14%	15%	9,818	15%	15%	15%
**Fuel Poverty LIHC	8,742	11%	10%	11%	7,218	11%	11%	11%
Low income households	29,336	35%	28%	33%	17,084	26%	20%	24%
All Cat 2 hazards	12,499	15%	29%	31%	10,849	16%	31%	33%

Table 1.2 Estimates of the numbers and percentages of dwellings meeting key indicator criteria for all stock and private sector stock in Peterborough compared to East of England and England (English House Survey 2011)

Indicator	Private Sector Stock				Social Stock	
	Owner Occupied		Private Rented		No	%
	No	%	No	%		
No of dwellings	49,956	-	16,458	-	16,281	-
All Cat 1 hazards	5,442	11%	2,510	15%	985	6%
Excess Cold	1,639	3%	647	4%	236	1%
Falls	4,536	9%	2,178	13%	700	4%
Disrepair	1,139	2%	839	5%	145	1%
*Fuel Poverty 10%	6,500	13%	3,318	20%	2,201	14%
**Fuel Poverty LIHC	4,156	8%	3,062	19%	1,524	9%
Low income households	10,444	21%	6,640	40%	12,252	75%
All Cat 2 hazards	7,203	14%	3735	23%	1,050	6%

Table 1.3 Estimate of the numbers and percentage of dwellings meeting the key indicator criteria by tenure for Peterborough

*10% Fuel Poverty Indicator – More than 10% of household income spent on fuel to maintain an adequate level of warmth, 21°C in living room, 18°C in other occupied rooms

**Low Income High Cost Fuel Poverty Indicator – required fuel costs are above average (national median level) and were household to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line

1.5.8 The estimated number of dwellings with HHSRS Category 1 hazards in Peterborough's private sector stock is 7,952. The estimated average cost of mitigating hazards per dwelling is £3,548 resulting in the total cost of mitigating all hazards within those dwellings as £28.2 million

- 1.5.9 7.3% (4,821) of all private sector dwellings and 8.8% (1,454) of private rented dwellings in Peterborough are estimated to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating below band E
- 1.5.10 In Peterborough's private sector stock there is an estimated 13,374 dwellings with un-insulated cavity walls and 9,652 dwellings with less than 100mm of loft insulation
- 1.5.11 Using the 10% Fuel Poverty Indicator 6,500 (13%) of owner occupied dwellings and 3,318 (20%) of private rented dwellings are occupied by households in fuel poverty. These figures fall to 4,156 (8%) and 3,062 (19%) respectively when using the Low Income High Cost Fuel Poverty Indicator.
- 1.5.12 As well as commissioning the stock modelling, Peterborough City Council also commissioned a quantitative Health Impact Assessment which utilises the data in the stock modelling to better understand the effect of private sector housing hazards and intervention strategies on the health of residents in Peterborough using the methodology developed by the BRE for the "Real Cost of Poor Housing" publication.
- 1.5.13 The key findings of the Health Impact Assessment estimated there are 11,796 Category 1 hazards in Peterborough's private sector stock, of which over 3,700 are within the privately rented sector.
- 1.5.14 The estimated total cost of mitigating the Category 1 hazards so that the risk is reduced to an acceptable level is £27 million with £8.4 million in the private rented sector.
- 1.5.15 It is estimated that poor housing conditions are responsible for over 631 harmful events requiring medical treatment every year
- 1.5.16 The estimated cost to the NHS of treating accidents and ill health caused by these hazards is £2.1 million each year. If the wider costs to society are considered, the total costs are estimated to be £5.2 million each year
- 1.5.17 If these hazards are mitigated to an acceptable level then the total annual savings to society are estimated to be £4.9 million, including £1.9 million of savings to the NHS.

Peterborough's Housing - Disabled Facility Adaptations & The Home Services Delivery Model

- 1.5.18 The introduction of the Better Care Fund in April 2014 and the Care Act in April 2015 is leading to the creation of new integrated services centred around the home. Peterborough City Council's Home Service Delivery Model, launched in October 2016, brings together Therapy

Services, Reablement, Assisted Technology and the Care & Repair Improvement Agency, working closely with the Housing Programmes and the Housing Needs Teams. This new service will be co-located within Adult Social Care.

1.5.19 In addition to making the grant delivery more effective, efficient and customer focussed, the preventative role of the Disabled Facility Grant in keeping people living safely and independently can be fully explored by using the extra Disabled Facility Allocation received through the Better Care Fund in more flexible and responsive ways to help reduce pressures on health and social care.

1.6 Types of Assistance Available

1.6.1 The following forms of assistance are available from Peterborough City Council to address the issues described above:

- Repairs Assistance
- Empty Homes Assistance
- Disabled Persons Relocation Grant
- Mandatory Disabled Facility Grant
- Discretionary Disabled Facility Grant

CHAPTER 2

2.1 REPAIRS ASSISTANCE

2.1.1 Assistance may be awarded to a vulnerable client who has:

- an owner's interest (alone or jointly with others) in the dwelling to which the application relates for at least 3 years. This includes a leasehold with a legal obligation to repair with a minimum of five years left unexpired
- occupied the dwelling for at least 3 years
- a medical condition or other vulnerability that may be affected by the condition of their property or
- whose housing conditions are such that they may be detrimental to their health, safety or wellbeing

2.1.2 A vulnerable person for the purpose of this policy is defined as a person on low income, who is receipt of one of the following means tested benefits:

- Income Support
- income-related Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income based Employment Support Allowance
- Guaranteed Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit with an income under £15,050.00
- Universal Credit

Or has

- a combined gross household income, from all sources including assessed income from savings and/or capital, of less than £20,000

2.1.3 and includes;

- people living with a chronic or severe health difficulty/illness/frailty or disability (evidence may be sought)
- Older people or pre-school children - defined as those over 60 and under 5 years of age

2.1.4 For those applicants not included within paragraph 2.1.2 above, the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996, as amended, shall be applied to calculate the applicant's contribution in order to assess the extent to which any assistance may be given up to the maximum eligible expense limit.

2.1.5 The applicant and all adults living in the property must be receiving a means tested benefit or have been means tested as described in 2.1.4 above, for Repair Assistance purposes.

2.1.6 Repairs Assistance is a discretionary grant and is provided subject to funding availability. It may be necessary to prioritise cases which will take into consideration the following factors:

- The severity of the hazard(s) identified under the HHSRS Assessment and the risk to health posed

by those hazards

- Chronic or severe illness and disability - including respiratory condition, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart conditions, asthma, poor mobility
- The age of the applicant
- Lack of/inefficient boiler and central heating systems and thermally inefficient homes
- People who are in-patients at an NHS hospital and in need of works or repair or adaptation enabling them to be safely discharged into their home
- Clients living alone
- Whether they have had financial assistance from the Council (except for insulation and heating measures) within the last 15 years

2.1.7 The maximum Repair Assistance is £20,000.

2.1.8 Repairs Assistance will be financial assistance in order to improve health and wellbeing, reduce longer term demand on health and social care services and facilitate the discharge from hospital or intermediate care.

2.1.9 All Repairs Assistance is project managed and delivered by the Home Improvement Agency. A fee for this service is charged and is added to the amount of assistance awarded.

2.1.10 Repairs Assistance funding will only pay for the works detailed in the Schedule produced by the Home Improvement Agency

2.1.11 All enquires related to insulation, boiler and heating measures will be screened for their eligibility for Central Government or Energy Company Obligation schemes before awarding any Council assistance outlined in this Policy. The current Energy Company Obligation qualification criteria are set out in Section 2.6 of this Policy.

2.2 Making a valid application

2.2.1 The applicant must provide all information or evidence (including information relating to financial and medical circumstances) as may reasonably be required for those purposes of determining an application for assistance.

2.2.2 An owner's application for Repair Assistance will not be considered a valid application unless it is accompanied by an owner-occupation certificate.

2.2.3 A tenant's application for Repair Assistance will not be considered valid unless it is accompanied by a tenant's certificate and a statement of consent to the works signed by the person who at the time of the application is the landlord under the tenancy.

2.3 Determining a valid application for Repair Assistance – eligibility conditions

2.3.1 An application is not a valid application unless all sections of the application form are completed or, where they do not apply, marked appropriately.

- 2.3.2 Unless the Council directs otherwise in any particular case, an application for assistance is not valid unless it is accompanied by at least 3 estimates from different contractors of the cost of carrying out the works to which the application relates if the work is over £5,000 or one written estimate for works under £5,000. The exception to this is a specification based on the priced schedule of rates for Boiler & Central Heating works based on the framework agreement currently in place.
- 2.3.3 The Council will not approve an application for Repair Assistance if the works to which the application relates have been started before the application is approved.

2.4 Determination and notification of amount of assistance

- 2.4.1 Where the Council has decided either to approve or refuse an application for Repair Assistance, it will notify the applicant of the outcome no later than two calendar month after the date of valid application.
- 2.4.2 If the application is refused, the Council will notify the applicant of the reasons for the refusal and inform the applicant of the Council's review procedure.
- 2.4.3 If the application is approved the notice will:
- specify the works for which assistance is approved
 - specify the full cost of the works for which assistance is approved;
 - specify the amount of assistance that is approved
 - provide a statement of the conditions to which assistance is subject;
- 2.4.4 The full cost of works will include:
- the cost of the building works (which will be the cost of the lowest of the quotes that accompanied the application, whether or not that contractor is the contractor that carries out the work); plus
 - the cost of any approved preliminary or ancillary services and charges. agreed by the Council to be necessary for the preparation and execution of the approved works and may include:
 - fees necessary to establish ownership of the dwelling;
 - architect's fees;
 - Peterborough City Council's Home Improvement Agency fees;
 - property valuation fees;
 - structural engineer's fees
 - Building Control fees
 - any other fees the Council may decide in any particular case.
- 2.4.5 If, after an application for Repair Assistance has been approved the Council is satisfied that owing to circumstances beyond the control of the applicant the work cannot be completed for the approved amount, the Council may re-determine the approved amount within the overall cost limits applying.

- 2.4.6 If the cost of the eligible works exceed the £20,000 Repairs Assistance maximum grant limit, the Home Improvement Agency will discuss with the applicant if they are able to meet the excess amount over the grant limit. If the applicant is able to make the excess contribution the Agency will secure a bankers draft from the applicant made payable to the successful contractor which will be held by the Agency and paid to the contractor on satisfactory completion of works.
- 2.4.7 If the applicant is unable to meet the excess costs over the maximum grant limit, discussion and agreement will take place on which works to omit from the specification which will have the minimal impact on the health, safety or wellbeing of the applicant and family and which will bring the overall cost of work under the £20,000 maximum grant limit.
- 2.4.8 Any financial assistance awarded will be registered as a land charge for the condition period and will be recoverable by the Council on sale of the property or transfer of the Freehold or Leasehold.

2.5 Payment of Repair Assistance

- 2.5.1 The Council may pay Repair Assistance in whole after the work has been completed; or in part by instalments. Where Repair Assistance is paid in instalments, the aggregate of instalments paid before the works are completed shall not exceed 90% of the original approved amount.
- 2.5.2 It is a condition of payment of Repairs Assistance that the approved works are carried out within 12 months from the date of approval unless the Council agrees otherwise in any particular case.
- 2.5.3 The payment of Repair Assistance is conditional on –
- the approved works being carried out to the satisfaction of the Council, and
 - the Council being provided with an acceptable invoice or receipt for payment for the building works and for any other approved services and charges, and
 - the work being carried out by the approved contractor appointed by the Home Improvement Agency whose quote accompanied the application unless the Council agrees otherwise by prior notification in any particular case.
- 2.5.4 The Council will pay Repairs Assistance directly to the contractor.
- 2.5.5 Where the approved work has not been carried out to the satisfaction of the applicant the Council may, at the request of the applicant and if it considers it to be reasonable, withhold payment.
- 2.5.6 Where an award of Repair Assistance has been approved but before the date on which the works are certified as having been completed to the satisfaction of the Council (the “certified date”) it subsequently appears to the Council that the applicant was not, at the time of approval, entitled to the award, or if the applicant has ceased to be a person entitled to the award, then no award will be payable or, as the case may be, no further payment will be made.

2.5.7 Where 2.5.6 above applies, the Council may demand that any payment of Repair Assistance which has been made is repaid, together with interest on that amount from the date on which it was paid until the date of repayment, at such reasonable rates as the Council may determine.

2.5.8 Where an award of Repair Assistance has been approved but:

- the amount of the award was determined on the basis of inaccurate or incomplete information with regard to section 2.3 of the Policy, or
- the approved works were started before the award was approved without the consent of the Council, or
- the eligible works were not completed to the satisfaction of the Council within the period specified in paragraph 2.5.2 or any extended period agreed under the provision of that paragraph, or
- the work was not carried out by an approved contractor appointed by the Home Improvement Agency whose quote accompanied the application

then the Council may –

- refuse to pay Repairs Assistance or, as the case may be, any further instalment of Repair Assistance, or
- re-determine the amount of Repair Assistance

and may in both cases demand that any payment of Repair Assistance which has been made is repaid, together with interest from the date on which it was paid until the date of repayment, at such reasonable rates as the Council may determine.

2.5.9 Repairs Assistance is discretionary and is provided subject to funding availability

2.6 Energy Company Obligation

2.6.1 The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a government energy efficiency scheme to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. Under the scheme, larger energy suppliers have to deliver energy efficiency measures to homes and are given targets based on their share of the domestic gas and electricity market. The scheme focuses on the installation of insulation and heating measures and supports vulnerable consumer groups. All enquires related to insulation, boiler and heating measures will be screened for their eligibility for Central Government or Energy Company Obligation schemes before awarding any Council assistance outlined in this Policy.

2.6.2 The Affordable Warmth element of ECO provides assistance if the property is privately owned or privately rented and the occupiers are in receipt of certain benefits. Householders receive all or part of the cost of insulation work, e.g to the loft and cavity walls or replacing or repairing a boiler or other upgrades to the heating system. To be eligible the householder must be in receipt of one of the following:

- Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (and your income is £16,010 or less)

- Working Tax Credit (and your income is £16,010 or less)
- Income Support
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income related Employment & Support Allowance
- Universal Credit (and you earned £1,250 or less after tax in any assessment period in the last 12 months)

2.6.3 For certain benefits one of the following must also apply:

- You get Child Tax Credit and your child is disabled
- You get Disabled child Premium
- You get Disability Premium
- You get Pensioner Premium
- You receive a work related activity or support component if you are claiming income related Employment & Support Allowance
- You are 60 or over – if you are claiming Working Tax Credit
- You get a limited capability for work or work related activity element if you are claiming Universal Credit
- You get Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment if you are claiming Universal Credit

2.6.4 To apply for ECO contact the Energy Savings Advice Service on Tel: 0300 123 1234 Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm

CHAPTER 3

3.1 REPAIRS ASSISTANCE TO PRIVATE LANDLORDS

Repairs Assistance will be considered for Landlords of private rented property where one or more Category 1 hazards have been identified through an HHSRS inspection and the landlord has informed the Council that he/she cannot meet the housing standard or licensing requirements following an inspection of the property. The landlord must have tenants in-situ as the assistance is awarded specifically to prevent Homelessness.

3.1.2 Assistance will be considered to carry out the necessary works identified by Senior Prevention & Enforcement Service Officers (Housing)

3.1.3 The maximum amount of assistance is £20,000

3.3 Determining a valid application for Repair Assistance to Private Landlord – eligibility conditions

3.3.1 The applicant must not have been the subject of any Housing Act enforcement action or convictions including not meeting the Fit & Proper Person Test

3.3.2 An application is not a valid application unless all sections of the application form are completed or, where they do not apply, marked appropriately.

3.3.3 Unless the Council directs otherwise in any particular case, an application for assistance is not valid unless it is accompanied by at least 3 estimates from different contractors of the cost of carrying out the works to which the application relates if the work is over £5,000 or one written estimate for works under £5,000.

3.3.4 The Council will not approve an application for Repair Assistance if the works to which the application relates have been started before the application is approved.

3.4 Determination and notification of amount of assistance

3.4.1 The provisions set out in Sections 2.4.1 to 2.4.7 of this Policy apply to Repairs Assistance to Private Landlords

3.4.2 Any financial assistance awarded will be registered as a legal land charge and will be recoverable by the Council on sale of the property or transfer of the Freehold or Leasehold.

3.5 Payment of Repair Assistance

3.5.1 The provisions set out in 2.5.1 to 2.5.9 of this Policy apply to Repairs Assistance to Private Landlords

3.6 Private Sector Leasing Scheme

- 3.6.1 Where Repairs Assistance to property owned by a Private Landlord is awarded, homelessness is prevented as the existing tenants remain in the property for the duration of their tenancy agreement. If the property is in the Selective Licensing area the Licensing process will continue and any concerns over the management of the property will be addressed through that process.
- 3.6.2 The landlord must agree to hand over the property when there is a change of tenant(s) and enter into a lease agreement with the Council for a minimum period of 5 years and a separate management agreement with the preferred management agent who will manage the property throughout the duration of the agreed lease period.
- 3.6.3 The landlord must make the property available to the Council for nomination to applicants in housing need for the duration of the agreed lease period. The Council will offer a guaranteed monthly rent (based on the Local Housing Allowance rate).
- 3.6.4 The owner must provide an annual Gas Safety check as well as an Energy Performance Certificate (a requirement for private rented properties)
- 3.6.5 At the end of the lease agreement the property is handed back to the owner in good repair in order to sell or continue renting it out.
- 3.6.6 Repairs Assistance to Private Landlords is discretionary and is provided subject to funding availability

CHAPTER 4

4.1 EMPTY HOME ASSISTANCE

- 4.1.1 There are many ways in which the Council works towards bringing empty properties back into use as residential accommodation, including the use of Empty Dwelling Management Orders where the Council takes over the management of the property for up to 7 years. The property has to be empty for a minimum of 2 years and causing anti-social behaviour and/or is having a significantly adverse effect on the community.
- 4.1.2 The Council is introducing discretionary Empty Homes Assistance to act as an incentive to owners to put their empty properties forward to be used as accommodation for families in need of housing on the Council's Housing Register. This initiative will contribute to increasing housing supply in the City making more privately owned homes available to the Housing Needs Service.
- 4.1.3 To be considered for Empty Homes Assistance, the property must have been empty for a minimum of 6 months prior to application and be of the type of accommodation in need by clients on the Housing Register.
- 4.1.4 The Empty Homes Officer will assess the property and the potential refurbishment costs in order to determine the lease period which will be a minimum of 5 years.
- 4.1.5 The Council will initially offer Empty Homes Assistance in order to carry out the necessary repairs and refurbishment. The Home Improvement Agency will schedule the required works, tender the work using their approved contractors and oversee the work onsite.
- 4.1.6 The maximum amount of Empty Homes Assistance is £20,000 per property. Only one grant will be considered per property.
- 4.1.7 Empty Homes Assistance will be secured by attaching a legal charge to the property for the duration of the lease agreement from when the works are complete. If the property is disposed of during the lease period, the Council will seek repayment of the Empty Homes Assistance in full together with interest from the certified completion date of works until the date of repayment, at such reasonable rates as the Council may determine.
- 4.1.8 The property owner must enter into a lease agreement with the Council and a separate management agreement with the preferred management agent who will manage the property throughout the duration of the agreed lease period.
- 4.1.9 The property owner must make the property available for lease to the Council for nomination to applicants in housing need for the duration of the agreed lease period and immediately after any remedial works have been carried out.
- 4.1.10 The Council will then offer a guaranteed monthly rent (based on the Local Housing Allowance rate) and will nominate a household in housing need into the property. The Council will recoup

the repairs and refurbishment costs from the monthly rent, minus any fees for the management of the property during the lease period.

- 4.1.11 An annual Gas Safety check as well as an Energy Performance Certificate (a requirement for private rented properties) will be carried out as part of the Lease agreement. 10% of the annual rental income will be held in a separate account to cover the cost of any general wear and tear. Any remaining monies at the end of the lease period will be paid back directly to the owner.
- 4.1.12 Once the repairs and refurbishment costs have been repaid in full any remaining rental income will be paid to the owner (less management fees) for the remainder of the lease. At the end of the lease agreement the property is handed back to the owner in good repair in order to sell or continue renting it out.

Empty Homes Assistance & Owners in Residential Care

- 4.1.13 Empty Homes Assistance and the Private Sector Leasing Scheme will also be available to people living in long term residential care who own a vacant property enabling them to lease their house to the Council to house a family in housing need in return for a guaranteed rent, which could contribute towards their care costs, for a fixed period of time.
- 4.1.14 If the property is in disrepair, the Council will offer Empty Homes Assistance to carry out the necessary work and recoup that expenditure from the rental income over the period of the lease agreement. Works will be managed by the Home Improvement Agency using their approved contractors.
- 4.1.15 The property will be managed by the local authority in partnership with a private leasing agent. If Empty Home Assistance is awarded the lease will be for 5 years. This could reduce if no Assistance was awarded. At the end of the lease, the owner could extend the lease, occupy the property or sell it in an improved condition.

Empty Homes Assistance & Private Rented Properties

- 4.1.16 Empty Homes Assistance and the Private Sector Leasing Scheme may also be offered to properties owned by Private Landlords that are currently empty as the landlord cannot meet the licensing or housing standard requirements. In order to receive Empty Homes Assistance the owner must not have been the subject of any Housing Act enforcement action or convictions including not meeting the Fit & Proper Person Test
- 4.1.17 The provisions detailed in 4.1.2 to 4.1.12 of this Section also apply for applicants who are private landlords.
- 4.1.18 Empty Home Assistance is discretionary and is provided subject to funding availability.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 DISABLED PERSONS RELOCATION GRANT

- 5.1.1 Applications for assistance made for the purpose may be approved to enable a person to move to more suitable accommodation if:
- (a) advice and adaptation recommendation has been received from Adult Social Care or Children's Services
 - (b) in the Council's opinion the disabled person's existing accommodation is not reasonably and practically capable of being adapted to meet the needs of the disabled person or due to cost or to social reasons, and
 - (c) the aggregate cost of all assistance made by the Council would not, in the opinion of the Council, exceed the cost of adapting the disabled person's existing accommodation.
- 5.1.2 To qualify, the applicant must have an owner's interest in the property or is proposing to acquire an owner's interest or a leaseholder with a legal obligation to repair with a minimum of 5 years left unexpired
- 5.1.3 An award made under this section may include the cost of:
- removal expenses;
 - carpets, window coverings and white goods where the replacement is wholly and necessarily required as a consequence of the relocation;
 - estate agent's fees;
 - redecoration;
 - security measures;
 - any other expense of relocation reasonably incurred as a result of the relocation
- 5.1.4 Unless the Council decides otherwise, a grant will be calculated according to the cost of the lower of two quotations provided by the applicant to the Council and found to be acceptable by the Council.
- 5.1.5 Grant will be calculated according to the replacement value of goods of a standard equivalent to the applicant's existing goods.
- 5.1.6 Grant will be made to the full extent of the expense incurred only where the Council accept such expense is reasonable.
- 5.1.7 Grant may not be paid if the applicant is transferring to a rented property and redecoration is the owner's responsibility.
- 5.1.8 Applicants will not be means tested for this grant
- 5.1.9 No repeat relocation grants will be awarded
- 5.1.10 A visit will be made to the property being considered for relocation by the Housing Programmes Manager and an Occupational Therapist from Adult Social Care or Children's Services to ensure

that it is suitable and will meet the needs of the disabled person.

- 5.1.11 A Disabled Facility Grant may also be subsequently awarded after relocation in order to provide internal adaptations to meet the disabled person's needs.
- 5.1.12 The maximum grant payable will be £30,000 which includes both the relocation element and the adaptation costs in the new property.
- 5.1.13 Disabled Person Relocation Grant will be secured as a legal land charge for a period of 10 years from the certified completion date and will be required to be repaid on sale or transfer of the freehold or leasehold.
- 5.1.14 Where an award has been made under this section of the Policy and the applicant dies before the relocation has taken place, the Council may pay the relocation grant or any part thereof.
- 5.1.15 Disabled Persons Relocation Grant is discretionary and is provided subject to funding availability.

CHAPTER 6

6.1 MANDATORY DISABLED FACILITY GRANT

6.1.1 The provisions governing Mandatory Disabled Facility Grants are set out in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, as amended by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England & Wales) Order 2002.

6.1.2 The maximum grant will be £30,000 in any one application.

6.1.3 To qualify for assistance an applicant should be the homeowner or tenant, but the grant is available to help the home to be adapted to meet the needs of any disabled person living in the property to enable them to continue living there. Landlords may also apply for a Disabled Facility Grant on behalf of a disabled tenant but must also satisfy the requirements of future occupancy. Council tenants and housing association tenants are eligible to apply for Disabled Facility Grant and are assessed for needs on the same basis as private owners and under the same means testing arrangements

6.1.4 For those client who are in receipt of: -

- Income support
- Income-related Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income based Employment Support Allowance
- Guaranteed Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Working Tax or Child Tax Credit with income under £15,050]
- Universal Credit

at the time the application is made their contribution towards the Disabled facility Grant will be NIL

6.1.5 For those applicants not included within paragraph 6.1.4 above, the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996, as amended, shall be applied to calculate the applicant's contribution in order to assess the extent to which any assistance may be given up to the maximum eligible expense limit

6.1.6 The parents of disabled children are not means tested for applications for Disabled Facility Grant funding. Full grant entitlement up to a maximum of £30,000 is available for eligible works

6.1.7 Peterborough City Council will liaise with Registered Providers of social housing in order to award tenants who are entitled to a mandatory Disabled Facility Grant funding on a 50:50 split or any other funding amount agreed.

6.1.8 Where the works cost in excess of £30,000 and the applicant and/or his/her family is considered to be in financial hardship, the Care & Repair Home Improvement Agency will investigate alternative means of funding, including charitable contributions in order to meet the applicant's costs above the value of the Disabled Facility Grant.

6.1.9 Where the works cost in excess of £30,000 and the applicant and/or his/her family is considered

to be in financial hardship and alternative sources of funding are not forthcoming, consideration may be given to awarding a discretionary Disabled Facility Grant in addition to the mandatory Disabled Facility Grant. The Discretionary Disabled facility Grant is covered in Section 7 of this Policy.

- 6.1.10 All large scale proposals will be subject to a feasibility visit by the Housing Programmes Manager and an Occupational Therapist from Adult Social Care or Children's Services. The feasibility visit will look at the disabled person's needs identified by the Occupational Therapist and establish the most suitable housing solution to meet those needs.
- 6.1.11 First consideration will be given to the internal alteration or rearrangement of living accommodation within the existing dwelling.
- 6.1.12 If the property does not lend itself to internal adaptation, consideration will be given to assessing the disabled person's (and family's) ability to relocate to a more suitable property. The Disabled Persons Relocation Grant is covered in Chapter 5 of this policy.
- 6.1.13 Only when internal alteration, rearrangement or relocation is not feasible will consideration be given to providing additional sleeping and/or bathing accommodation by way of an extension to the existing dwelling.
- 6.1.14 Other than in exceptional circumstances agreed by the City Council, all Disabled Facility Grants are project managed and delivered by the Home Improvement Agency. A fee for this service is charged and in most circumstances will be included in the grant award.
- 6.1.15 In circumstances where the applicant wishes to and can demonstrate to the Council that they have the financial resource to achieve an adaptation which exceeds that which the Council has deemed is needed to meet the needs of the disabled person, then the Council may consider funding those elements of the adaptation which it could have funded under the mandatory DFG. For example, the fitting out of a Level Access Shower or the installation of a ceiling track hoist in any extension that the applicant supplies and funds
- 6.1.16 The only works that the Council will consider funding in relation to section 6.1.15 are the disabled facilities needed in ground floor adaptations.
- 6.1.17 If the Council has not received a full Disabled Facility Grant application for any proposal in relation to section 6.1.15 within a period of 6 months from the time it was first raised with the Council, the case will be closed.
- 6.1.18 Where an applicant's prognosis implies that degeneration in the short term will occur, then this should be taken into account when considering the eligible works.
- 6.1.19 The purposes for which Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants may be given are detailed in Section 6.2 below

6.2 Facilitating Access and Provision

- 6.2.1 These include works to remove or help overcome any obstacles which prevent the disabled person from moving freely into and around the dwelling and enjoying the use of the dwelling and the facilities or amenities within it. In particular,
- facilitating access to and from the dwelling or the building in which the dwelling or, as the case may be, flat is situated;
 - facilitating access to a room used or usable as the principal family room;
 - facilitating access to a room used or usable for sleeping, or alternatively providing such a room for the disabled occupant;
 - facilitating access to a room in which there is a lavatory, a bath or shower (or both) and a wash basin or providing a room in which there is such a facility or facilities;
 - facilities for the preparation and cooking of food.
- 6.2.2 In considering applications for grant towards such works, the presumption should be that the occupant should have reasonable access into his home, to the main habitable rooms with the home – namely the living room and bedroom, and to a bathroom or shower room in which there are suitable facilities for washing and/or showering.
- 6.2.3 Items that will attract Disabled Facility Grant funding include adaptations requiring structural modifications as long as they are reasonable and practicable and form part of the mandatory works for the disabled person and may include:
- A ramp (and associated guard rails if necessary) to gain access into and out of the property
 - Thresholds and associated doors including the relocation of door handles etc
 - Internal door adaptations to:
 - the principal family room if more than one person
 - the sleeping area
 - the WC, bath or shower and wash hand basin, including provision of lever taps where necessary
 - the preparation and cooking of food area
 - Overhead tracking with associated electrics and joist strengthening

6.3 Making a dwelling or building safe

- 6.3.1 Adaptations to the dwelling or building to make it safe for the disabled person and other persons residing with him. This may be the provision of lighting where safety is an issue or for adaptations designed to minimise the risk of danger where a disabled person has behavioural problems which causes him to act in a boisterous or violent manner damaging the house, himself and perhaps other people. Where such need has been identified, DFG is available to carry out appropriate adaptations to eliminate or minimise that risk.
- 6.3.2 For those with hearing difficulties, an enhanced alarm system, which may be required in the dwelling to provide improved safety for the disabled occupant in connection with the use of cooking facilities or works to provide means of escape from fire could also qualify for mandatory grant.

- 6.3.3 Provision of specialised lighting (or measures such as special blinds to reduce lighting where the disabled person has sensitivity to light), toughened or shatterproof glass in certain parts of the dwelling (i.e. in doors and side panels at entrance points) to which the disabled person has normal access or the installation of guards around certain facilities such as fires or radiators to prevent the disabled person harming himself. Sometimes reinforcement of floors, walls or ceilings may be needed, as may be cladding of exposed surfaces and corners to prevent self-injury.

6.4 Room usable for sleeping

- 6.4.1 While in some cases a living room may be large enough to enable a second room for sleeping to be created, in smaller homes this will not be possible. The provision of a room usable for sleeping should therefore only be undertaken if the housing authority are satisfied that the adaptation of an existing room in the dwelling (upstairs or downstairs) or the access to that room is unsuitable in the particular circumstances. Where the disabled occupant shares a bedroom with another person, mandatory grant may be given to provide a room of sufficient size so that the normal sleeping arrangements can be maintained.
- 6.4.2 If a single disabled person applies, consideration will be given to adapt an existing room to provide a bedroom or create a bed-sitting room.
- 6.4.3 If a relative is living as part of the family and conversion of the existing property is impracticable, e.g. understairs cupboard conversion for a WC or sub-dividing an existing room, consideration will be given to providing an adequate sized extension.

6.5 Bathroom

- 6.5.1 A disabled person should have access to a wash hand basin, a WC and a shower or bath (or if more appropriate, both a shower and a bath).
- 6.5.2 Facilities may include:
- flush floor harmer type shower or low level shower tray including curtain and rail
 - specialised bath including hydraulic shower seat when manual hoisting cannot be used with existing bathroom
 - lower height bath
 - overbath shower including curtain and rail
 - wall mounted wash hand basin
 - large vanity type wash hand basin where no bath or shower is to be used
 - WC including plinth where necessary
 - washing WC where self-hygiene cannot be achieved satisfactorily
 - including provision of lever taps where necessary

6.6 Facilitating preparation and cooking of food

- 6.6.1 A wide range of works are available to enable a disabled person to cater independently. Eligible works include the rearrangement or enlargement of a kitchen to ease manoeuvrability of a wheelchair and specially modified or designed storage units, gas, electricity and plumbing installations to enable the disabled person to use the facilities independently.

6.6.2 Facilities may include:

- one sink unit (adjustable, if partner is abled bodied) including lever taps where necessary
- 1 meter of work surface for the preparation of food (maximum)
- raising and lowering of power points (i.e. two double points and cooker panel where appropriate)
- relocation of existing units – if units cannot be relocated due to condition, allow one double storage cupboard.
- consideration will also be given to the colour differential between cupboards and work surfaces and existing tiling and wall surfaces

6.6.3 Where most of the cooking and preparation of meals is done by another household member, it would not normally be appropriate to carry out full adaptations to the kitchen. However, it might be appropriate that certain adaptations be carried out to enable the disabled person to perform certain functions in the kitchen, such as preparing light meals or hot drinks.

6.7 Heating, lighting and power

6.7.1 The improvement of an existing heating system in the dwelling to meet the disabled occupant's needs. Where there is no heating system or where the existing heating arrangements are unsuitable to meet his needs, a heating system may be provided. A Disabled Facility Grant should 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 should only be considered where the wellbeing and mobility of the disabled person would otherwise be adversely affected.

6.7.2 Provision may include:

- Heating to the main living room, bedroom and bathroom
- Where no other form of heating to the bathroom, allow for one dimplex or similar heater and storage heaters, or extend the existing system
- Where there are no adequate means of heating to the main living room, bedroom and bathroom, the existing heating system, if any, will be extended or a new heating system maybe installed in these rooms. Consideration will be given to each individual case with regards to installing electrical storage heaters or a new gas boiler and radiators.
- New gas pipe including appropriate boiler and connection to the mains supply, even outside the curtilage of the dwelling, if the only means of a suitable source of heating for the disabled occupant is by a wet radiator system.

6.7.3 Works to enable a disabled person to have full use of heating, lighting and power controls in the dwelling. Such work includes the relocation of power points to make them more accessible, the provision of suitably adapted controls where a disabled person has difficulty in using normal types of controls and the installation of additional controls.

6.7.4 Provision may include:

- Raising power points – one double power point in the bedroom, and two double power points in the living room or equivalent
- Lower light points to access the main living room, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom and hallway, if appropriate.

6.8 Dependent residents

6.8.1 Works to a dwelling required to enable a disabled occupant better access and movement around the dwelling in order to care for another person who normally resides where whether or not they are related to the disabled person. This may include spouse, partner or family member, another disabled person or a child. Importantly the dependent being cared for need not be disabled. Such works could include adaptations to part of the dwelling to which the disabled person would not normally need access but which is used by a person to whom they are providing care and therefore it is reasonable for such works to be carried out.

6.9 Access to garden

6.9.1 Works for:

- facilitating access to and from a garden by a disabled occupant, or
- making access to a garden safe for a disabled occupant.

6.10 Making a valid application

6.10.1 The applicant has provided all such information or evidence (including information relating to the disabled person's financial circumstances as may reasonably be required for those purposes of determining an application for Disabled Facility Grant.

6.10.2 An owner's application for Disabled Facility Grant will not be considered a valid application unless it is accompanied by an owner-occupation certificate.

6.10.3 A tenant's application for Disabled Facility Grant will not be considered valid unless it is accompanied by a tenant's certificate and a statement of consent to the works signed by the person who at the time of the application is the landlord under the tenancy.

6.11 Determining a valid application for Disabled Facility Grant – eligibility conditions

6.11.1 An application is not a valid application unless all sections of the application form are completed or, where they do not apply, marked appropriately.

6.11.2 Unless the Council directs otherwise in any particular case, an application for Disabled Facility Grant is not valid unless it is accompanied by at least 3 estimates from different contractors of the cost of carrying out the works to which the application relates if the work is over £5,000 or

one written estimate for works under £5,000. The exception to this is a specification based on the priced schedule of rates for Level Access Shower installations based on the framework agreement currently in place.

6.12 Determination and notification of amount of Disabled Facility Grant

6.12.1 Where the Council has decided either to approve or refuse an application for Disabled Facility Grant, it will notify the applicant of the outcome no later than six calendar months after the date of valid application.

6.12.2 If the application is refused, the Council will notify the applicant of the reasons for the refusal and inform the applicant of the Council's review procedure.

6.12.3 If the application is approved the notice will:

- specify the works for which Disabled Facility Grant is approved
- specify the full cost of the works for which Disabled Facility Grant is approved
- specify the amount of Disabled Facility Grant that is approved
- provide a statement of the conditions to which the Disabled Facility Grant is subject

6.12.4 The full cost of works will include:

- the cost of the adaptation works (which will be the cost of the lowest of the quotes that accompanied the application, whether or not that contractor is the contractor that carries out the work or the allocated contractor on the framework agreement); plus
- the cost of any approved preliminary or ancillary services and charges, agreed by the Council to be necessary for the preparation and execution of the approved works and may include:
 - fees necessary to establish ownership of the dwelling;
 - architect's fees;
 - Peterborough City Council Home Improvement Agency fees;
 - property valuation fees;
 - structural engineer's fees
 - Building Control fees
 - any other fees the Council may decide in any particular case.

6.12.5 If, after an application for Disabled Facility Grant has been approved the Council is satisfied that owing to circumstances beyond the control of the applicant the work cannot be completed for the approved amount, the Council may re-determine the approved amount within the overall cost limits applying.

6.12.6 Any financial assistance awarded in excess of £5,000 to a maximum of £10,000 will be registered as a local land charge for a period of 10 years and will be recoverable by the Council on sale of the property or transfer of the Freehold or Leasehold.

6.13 Payment of Disabled Facility Grant

6.13.1 The Council may pay Disabled Facility Grant funding in whole after the work has been completed or in part by instalments. Where Disabled Facility Grant is paid in instalments, the aggregate of

instalments paid before the works are completed shall not exceed 90% of the original approved amount.

- 6.13.2 The payment of Disabled Facility Grant is conditional on:
- The approved works being carried out within 12 months from the date of approval unless the Council agrees otherwise in any particular case and
 - the approved works being carried out to the satisfaction of the Council, and
 - the Council being provided with an acceptable invoice or receipt for payment for the building works and for any other approved services and charges, and
 - the work being carried out by the approved contractor appointed by the Home Improvement Agency whose quote or schedule of rate specification for Level Access Showers accompanied the application unless the Council agrees otherwise by prior notification in any particular case.

6.13.3 The Council will pay Disabled Facility Grant directly to the contractor.

6.13.4 Where the approved work has not been carried out to the satisfaction of the applicant the Council may, at the request of the applicant and if it considers it to be reasonable, withhold payment.

6.13.5 Where an award of Disabled Facility Grant has been approved but before the date on which the works are certified as having been completed to the satisfaction of the Council (the “certified date”) it subsequently appears to the Council that the applicant was not, at the time of approval, entitled to the award, or if the applicant has ceased to be a person entitled to the award, then no award will be payable or, as the case may be, no further payment will be made.

6.13.6 Where 6.13.5 above applies, the Council may demand that any payment of Disabled Facility Grant which has been made is repaid, together with interest on that amount from the date on which it was paid until the date of repayment, at such reasonable rates as the Council may determine.

- 6.13.7 Where an award of Disabled Facility Grant has been approved but:
- the amount of the award was determined on the basis of inaccurate or incomplete information with regard to sections 6.10 and 6.11 of the Policy, or
 - the approved works were started before the award was approved without the consent of the Council, or
 - the eligible works were not completed to the satisfaction of the Council within the period specified in paragraph 6.13.2 or any extended period agreed under the provision of that paragraph, or
 - the work was not carried out by an approved contractor appointed by the Home Improvement Agency whose quote accompanied the application

then the Council may

- refuse to pay Disabled Facility Grant or, as the case may be, any further instalment of Disabled Facility Grant, or
- re-determine the amount of Disabled Facility Grant

and may in both cases demand that any payment of Disabled Facility Grant which has been made

is repaid, together with interest from the date on which is was paid until the date of repayment, at such reasonable rates as the Council may determine.

CHAPTER 7

DISCRETIONARY DISABLED FACILITY GRANT

7.1 A Discretionary Disabled Facility Grant may be available in conjunction with a Mandatory Disabled Facility Grant in order to provide additional assistance where the cost of eligible works exceeds the current mandatory maximum grant limit of £30,000. In addition Discretionary Disabled Facility Grant can be used to offer flexible support to disabled and vulnerable clients in order for them to live independently, to return from hospital and to potentially reduce expensive care packages.

7.2 Discretionary Disabled Facility Grant Top Up of Mandatory Disabled Facility Grants

7.2.1 To qualify, the applicant must have an owner's interest in the property or be a leaseholder with a legal obligation to repair with a minimum of 5 years left unexpired.

7.2.2 A financial assessment will be carried out to determine the applicant/disabled person's inability to meet the shortfall in funding in excess of the mandatory £30,000 limit.

7.2.3 The Discretionary Disabled Facility Grant will contribute to the total cost of eligible works to meet the needs of the disabled person as assessed and recommended by the Occupational Therapist which is in excess of the Mandatory Disabled Facility Grant and the relevant disabled person's contribution as calculated by the means test.

7.2.4 The maximum amount of Discretionary Disabled Facility Grant will be £20,000

7.2.5 The amount of the Discretionary Disabled Facility Grant will be secured by attaching a legal charge on the adapted property. This charge applies if the applicant has a qualifying owner's interest in the property on which the adaptations are to be carried out.

7.2.6 The charge on the adapted property will last for 10 years from the completion of the Discretionary Disabled Facility Grant.

7.2.7 This is a discretionary grant and is subject to funding being available.

7.3 Discretionary DFG - Flexible Approach to Support Key Health Priorities

7.3.1 The introduction of the Better Care Fund in April 2014 and the Care Act in April 2015 is leading to the creation of new integrated services centred around the home. Peterborough City Council's Home Service Delivery Model brings together Therapy Services, Reablement, Assistive Technology and the Care & Repair Home Improvement Agency and will work closely with the Housing Programmes and the Housing Needs Teams.

7.3.2 In addition to making the grant delivery more effective, efficient and customer focussed, the

preventative role of the Disabled Facility Grant in keeping people living safely and independently can be fully explored by using the extra Disabled Facility Grant Allocation within the Better Care Fund in more flexible and responsive ways to help reduce pressures on health and social care. The use of Discretionary Disabled Facility Grant to support speedy transfers of care and reduce admission and readmission to hospital and to reduce the cost of domiciliary care packages is of particular importance.

- 7.3.3 Discretionary Disabled Facility Grants to Support Health are not subject to a means test
- 7.3.4 To qualify, the applicant must have an owner's interest in the property or be a leaseholder with a legal obligation to repair with a minimum of 5 years left unexpired.
- 7.2.5 The maximum amount of Discretionary Disabled Facility Grant to Support Health will be £6,000
- 7.3.6 The Discretionary Disabled Facility Grant to Support Health will contribute to the total cost of eligible works to meet the needs of the disabled person in a timely manner. The eligible work is the work assessed or recommended by the Occupational Therapist or NHS/CCG to prevent hospital/care admission or to facilitate the discharge of a hospital patient enabling them to live independently.
- 7.3.7 The type of work that will be considered is:
- Clearance and a one-off deep clean of hoarded and filthy properties
 - Ceiling Track Hoists to facilitate care
 - Level access showers to facilitate care
 - Heating and energy efficiency measures
 - Sensory Equipment
 - Ramps and door widening to facilitate access
 - Telephone line to facilitate Assistive Technology
 - Safety equipment – alarms, safety locks, specialised lighting, fire/radiator guards
 - Work in the property to reduce the risk of falls
 - Any other request deemed reasonable and practicable, necessary and appropriate to facilitate independent living

CHAPTER 8

CONDITIONS ON FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- 8.1 This section will apply when an owner occupier's application for assistance has been approved by the Council and an offer made to the applicant which the applicant has accepted. The term "assistance" means any form of financial assistance approved for the purpose of housing renewal, maintenance, improvement or adaptation. "Condition" means any condition attached to any such assistance.
- 8.2 Any reference to "owner" or "person responsible" is to be taken to mean any owner or other person who is responsible for the relevant condition(s), assistance either singly or jointly. This includes the original person(s) who applied for and/or received the assistance, as well as any other person who has subsequently become responsible for any condition as a result of acquiring the property or an interest in it.
- 8.3 Conditions come into force from the date the assistance is approved so that the Council may recover any interim payments or costs incurred where necessary. Where a condition period is specified, this takes effect from the certified date of completion of the eligible works.
- 8.4 Any financial assistance and related conditions will be secured as a legal charge against the property, where breach of condition would require the repayment of all or part of the assistance. This charge will not be removed until either the condition period expires or until the assistance is repaid, together with any interest that may apply.
- 8.5 In some cases, if the conditions are broken the Housing Programmes Manager may specify that only part of the assistance has to be repaid. In these cases the charge will be removed upon payment of the specified part of the assistance
- 8.6 Where the Council has the right to demand repayment, it may determine not to demand payment or to demand a lesser amount if:
- the extent to which the recipient of the grant would suffer financial hardship were he be required to repay all or any of the grant
 - the owner, or any member of the owner's family who lives in the dwelling as their only or main residence, is aged 60 or over, or is infirm, and
 - the disposal is being made for the purpose of enabling that person who is aged 60 or over, or is infirm to be cared for, and
 - the Council is satisfied that such arrangements for the care of that person who is aged 60 or over, or is infirm will not otherwise be possible.
 - Whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or wellbeing of the recipient of the grant or of a disabled occupant of the premises, and
 - 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 reason of disability or infirmity,
 - the sale is made to enable the owner or his partner to take up employment or to change

location of his employment and the Council is satisfied that the offer would otherwise not be able to be accepted

- 8.7 A charge on the property is binding on any person who is, for the time being, an owner of the property concerned.
- 8.8 Where a condition is in force, the Council may require the person responsible to provide any information to satisfy the Council that the condition is being complied with. The Council can require this information in writing or in any other reasonable form. It is a condition that this information is provided in a reasonable time period specified by the Council and as fully, accurately and honestly as reasonably possible. Failure to comply with this requirement is a breach of conditions in itself and the assistance, or part assistance where this is specified, must then be repaid to the Council.
- 8.9 It is the responsibility of the person responsible for any condition to demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that the condition is being complied with. Failure to do so will be treated as failure to comply with the condition. The Council does not have the burden of having to prove that the condition is not being complied with.
- 8.10 Any reference to a member of a person's family is to be taken to mean someone who is their:
- Parent
 - Grandparent
 - Child (including illegitimate child)
 - Grandchild
 - Brother or Sister
 - Uncle or Aunt
 - Nephew or niece

A relationship by marriage is treated as if it were a relationship by blood. A half-blood relationship is treated as a full blood relationship.

- 8.11 "Disposal" means
- A conveyance of the freehold
 - An assignment of the lease - where the lease was used to qualify for the assistance, e.g. a long lease that was treated as effective ownership
 - The grant of a lease, other than a mortgage term, for a term of more than 21 years otherwise than at a rack rent
 - In the case of a mobile home or a houseboat, the sale, pledge or assignment of the mobile home or houseboat

It is assumed that any option to renew or extend a lease or sub-lease, whether or not forming part of a series of options, is exercised and that any option to terminate a lease or sub-lease is not exercised. Also, the grant of an option enabling a person to call for a disposal shall be treated as such a disposal made to that person

- 8.12 An exempt disposal means that there is no requirement to repay. However, all the conditions do then continue to apply and are binding upon the person or persons to whom the disposal is

made for the remainder of the condition period. A disposal is classed as exempt where the person, or each of the persons, to whom it is made is:

- The person, or one of the persons, by whom the disposal is made
- A member of the family of that person, or one of those persons
- The spouse or former spouse of that person, or one of those persons, in the case of a company, an associated company of the company by whom the disposal is made

8.13 No retrospective application or request for financial assistance will be considered where the relevant work has already started or completed.

8.14 Unless otherwise specified, all relevant work must be completed, to the satisfaction of the Council, within 12 months of the approval date of the assistance. The Council may agree, in writing, an extension to this period, but this will only be done if there is an extremely good reason.

8.15 Work must be carried out by the contractor who provided the estimate or who was allocated from the Schedule of Rates Framework on which the assistance was based.

8.16 A grant will only be paid when the Council receives a satisfactory invoice in relation to the work, together with any supporting documentation or information requested by the Council

8.17 The approval of assistance does not give or imply the Council's approval of any consents that may be required, such as planning permission or Building Regulation consent.

8.18 It is a condition of Repairs Assistance that for the duration of the condition period the homeowner will ensure that the property is kept maintained and that the property has appropriate house insurance cover. The Council will require copies of the annual house insurance policy from the applicant to satisfy this condition. On payment of Repairs Assistance the applicant must notify the Council of the insurance company the policy is held with.

8.19 It is a condition of any assistance that the applicant takes all reasonable steps to pursue any insurance or legal claim that may be relevant to any part of the work to be carried out and to repay the Council the assistance, so far as appropriate, out of the proceeds of such a claim. A claim is relevant if it relates to any damage or defect to the property, to the extent that the works required to make good damage or defect are works to which the assistance relates.

8.20 Conditions will generally be enforced in all cases. Money repaid will be recycled into the Council's capital programme for further assistance awards

8.21 Condition Periods

Assistance Type	Value	Condition Period from Certified Completion Date	Interest Applied
Repairs Assistance - Owner/Occupiers	Full amount of Assistance	30 years	Yes
Repairs Assistance - Private Landlords	Full amount of Assistance	Until property disposal	Yes
Mandatory DFG	Amount of Grant over £5,000 to a max of £10,000	10 years	No
Discretionary Top Up DFG	Up to £20,000	10 years	Yes
Discretionary DFG - To Support Health	No Conditions	0 years	No
Disabled Persons Relocation Grant	Up to £30,000	10 years	Yes
Empty Homes Assistance	Up to £20,000	Duration of Lease period	Yes

CHAPTER 9

OTHER MATTERS

9.1 Decision Review

- 9.1.1 Any decision made under the Policy may be reviewed at the request of the applicant. The review request should be addressed to the officer who made the decision being appealed against in writing, and within 21 days of the date of the decision letter unless the Council determines otherwise in any particular case.
- 9.1.2 The review will be conducted by a senior Council officer not previously connected with the case (the "Review Officer").
- 9.1.3 The Review Officer will make such enquiries and request such evidence as he/she thinks necessary and will inform the appellant in writing of his/her decision within ten days of receiving such evidence.
- 9.1.4 Where he/she refuses an appeal, the Review Officer will inform the appellant of his/her rights under the Council's complaint procedure and the Local Authority Ombudsman procedure.

9.2 Reviewing the Policy

- 9.2.1 This Policy came into force in January 2017 by Cabinet Member Decision Notice. It will remain in force until the end of 2019. Minor changes which do not affect the broad scope of the policy may from time to time be made by the Assistant Director Adult Operations and the Head of Housing, Prevention & Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities & Environmental Capital.
- 9.2.2 Changes to the Policy may be made by the Head of Housing, Prevention & Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Planning. All changes will be recorded by Decision Notices signed by the Cabinet Member for Communities & Environmental Capital

9.3 Budgetary Matters

- 9.3.1 The budget for Repair Assistance and Empty Homes Assistance for 2016/2017 is set at £1,158, 852.
- 9.3.2 The budget for mandatory and discretionary Disabled Facility Grants for 2016/2017 is £2,210,633.
- 9.3.3 The budget will be reviewed and incorporated into the policy annually.

9.4 Performance

- 9.4.1 The performance of the policy will be monitored as part of the City Council's Adult Social Care Performance Management Framework with the statutory and locally determined performance indicators published in line with the framework.

9.5 Cases falling outside of the policy

- 9.5.1 For those applicants whose circumstances fall outside the scope of this policy, the applicant must put their case in writing to the Housing Programmes Manager who will review the circumstances of the case with the Head of Housing, Prevention & Wellbeing and the Cabinet Member for Communities & Environmental Capital. Should the case be refused the applicant can exercise their right to complain through the Council's complaints procedure