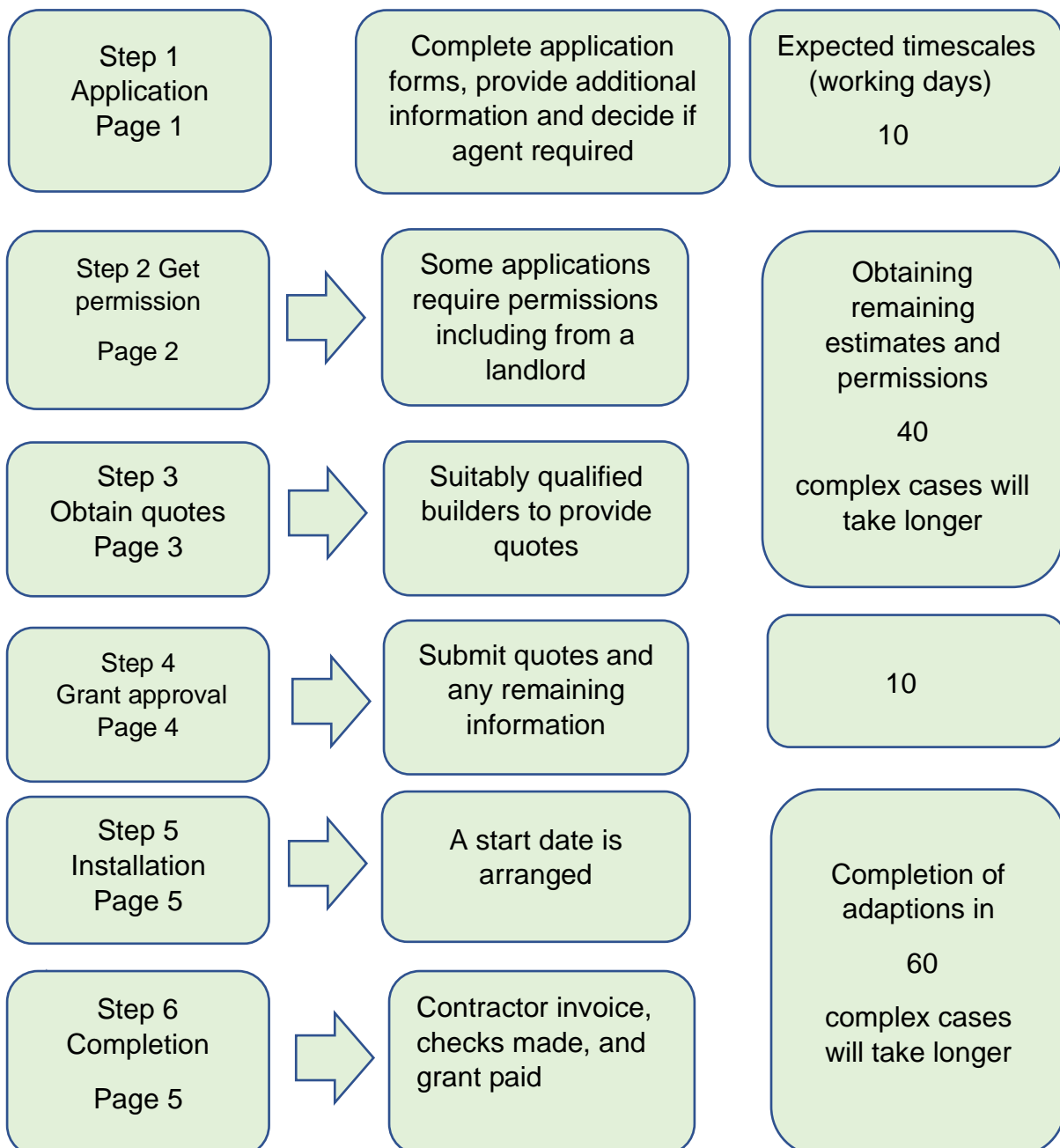


# Promoting independence: Your Guide to Disabled Facility Grants



Mid Sussex District Council have now received recommendations from your Occupational Therapist (OT) advising us what adaptations are suggested, this information allows the Disabled Facilities Grant application process to begin. This guide gives advice on the application process along with advice on contractors, agents and how long a grant should take. Once the suggested adaptations have been agreed by your OT and grant officer the application process will begin and comprises of six steps. Throughout the application process your grant officer is here to support you.



## STEP 1 Complete the application forms

The grant officer will contact you and complete the application forms, this can be either in electronic form or during a visit. You will need to have information about your finances available when filling out the forms. At this stage the grant officer will also provide advice on contact information for agents and contractors; however, you are free to choose any agent or contractor. For simple adaptations you may decide not to engage an agent, however agents can assist with more complex adaptations. Their role usually includes drawing plans, getting permissions, obtaining quotes, overseeing the building work, and resolving any problems. Certain housing associations use their own agent for complex adaptations who obtain quotes and oversee the works, applicants of such housing associations will therefore be supported through the grant process.

### Who needs to complete the form?

The owner or tenant of the property where the works are to take place.

### Will you need to complete a financial assessment?

No - if the application is for a child

No - if you receive certain 'passported benefit'

Yes - if you don't receive passported benefits

If you receive a passported benefit, you will need to provide evidence of this such as entitlement letters or a screen shot showing Universal Credit.

If you are not receiving a passported benefit, you must provide information of all your income and savings. This allows us to carry out a financial assessment to calculate if any contribution needs to be made. We'll need:

### A 'passported benefit' is?

- Guaranteed pension credit
- Income Support
- Income-based ESA
- Income based JSA
- Child or working tax credits where the income is less than £15,050
- Housing benefit
- Universal Credit
- Council Tax Support

- proof of any household income over the last 3 months, including benefits, allowances, pensions or salary.
- Statements for all current or savings accounts for the last three months.
- Evidence of savings bond/certificates, premium bonds, share certificates or other capital or investments.
- details of any other assets including property and land.

### What other information will you need to provide along with your application form?

- Copy of a utility bill no older than three months.
- if you are a tenant, you will need your landlord's details, as the grant officer will contact your landlord to confirm their consent to any works:
- if you are a joint owner, contact details for any owners who do not live at the property.
- if your application is for a mobile home, the agreement of the site owner may be required.

## STEP 2 Get permissions

It is your responsibility to obtain all the permissions you need before an application is made. If you have appointed an agent, they will do this on your behalf.

If you do incur costs in getting such permission, please list them on your application form as 'ancillary works'. Such costs can form part of your application.

### Before incurring any costs.

You must obtain written agreement of the proposed scheme from your OT and grant officer. Your contractor/agent must follow their recommendations and detailed guidance when planning your adaptation.

There may be more than one way to adapt your home. Your grant will always be based on the most cost-effective option.

### Planning permission

Does take time to obtain and may be required if:

- you are adding to or changing the structure of the property
- the building is listed
- is in a conservation area

### Building regulation approval

Will be required if you are:

- making structural alterations
- providing new drainage
- changing the internal arrangement of a home
- changing thermal elements.

### Party Wall Act 1996

May be applicable if you are undertaking works to the party wall or shared walls. Your agent will know the process.

### Structural alterations

If you are making structural changes, you may need assistance from a structural engineer.

### Landlord approval

If you are a tenant, your landlord will need to agree for the adaptations to be undertaken. Mobile homeowners may need the site owner's permission. As part of the application process, we will send the required forms to your landlord.

### Approval Checklist

- Has the scheme been agreed by your OT and grant officer?
- Is any permission required and have they been obtained?
- For tenants, has the landlord provided written consent?
- Joint owner will need to have written consent from other owners?
- Do I require a party wall agreement?

## STEP 3 Obtaining Estimates

At the initial stage of your application, we'll discuss obtaining estimates from contractors. We can give advice on contractors who have undertaken satisfactory work before, however it is your decision whether to use these contractors or another. Housing associations who appoint an agent will always use contractors from the agents approved list.

### What to look for

Finding a suitable contractor is the single most important part of the grant process. If you use an agent, they will help you select an appropriate contractor, but it is your decision who to appoint.

The contractor you choose should:

- be qualified
- ideally experienced in adaptations
- be reliable and knowledgeable
- supply good references from other clients

### Where to get help

If you need help finding a contractor, you can visit:

<https://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk/>  
or the competent Persons register at  
<https://www.competentperson.co.uk/>

### How many estimates will you need?

For adaptations under £10,000, we usually require one estimate, above this amount two estimates are required. Even if your adaptations are under £10,000 you may wish to obtain two estimates.

### What to ask for

When a shortlist of contractors is made, each contractor will visit your premises and prepare an estimate. If you use an agent, they will help you. All estimates must be in writing and on the company's headed paper.

For complex cases the grant officer and perhaps the OT may do a joint visit with the contractor.

Only eligible and agreed work can be grant funded. You must tell the contractors what is eligible so they can provide accurate and competitive quotes. Your contractors will provide a detailed breakdown of costs for all the eligible works, if they don't, we are unable to compare quotes and will ask for more accurate information. We will provide a basic schedule for your adaptation a copy of which must be given to your contractor.

### Extra work

You can ask the contractor to undertake extra work at your own expense, but they must provide a separate estimate.

### VAT – is your project zero rated?

Your contractor is responsible for making sure the correct amount of VAT is charged, as some but not all work is zero rated. You may be asked to complete a VAT exemption form by your contractor. Zero rated items include stairlifts and flush floor showers. More information can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reliefs-from-vat-for-disabled-and-older-people-notice-7017#building-and-construction>

### Asbestos

Contractors will look to see if asbestos is present. If it is believed to be present and may be disturbed, then a survey will be required to identify its extent and remedial action. Such costs will be eligible for grant funding.

#### Estimate checklist

- Obtain estimates – minimum of 1 below £10,000, two above this.
- Quote to be on company headed paper and addressed to you, not the Council.
- Check if the contractor is VAT registered.
- Make sure the contractor has all the information about the agreed work that needs undertaking.
- Ask for a detailed estimate with itemised costs
- Obtain separate estimate for any private work you want - keeping private work separate
- If you use an agent, they'll provide detailed drawings and a written specification for your contractor to price

## Step 4 Grant Approval

When all the required information is received, you have made a valid application and therefore we need to approve your grant.

#### Grant Approval

We aim to approve your grant in 10 days, although it may be longer.

You will receive written approval of your grant summarising the work, confirming the amount (maximum of £30,000) and stating any grant conditions.

#### When do I pay my contribution?

Usually, you pay the contractor upon completion of the works and before the grant payment is made. Your agent will also advise on when/where to pay your contribution.

Some contractors may require part of your contribution to be paid before works start as a deposit.

#### Grant Conditions

Your approval will state the conditions applicable, and they include:

- Works must be completed within 12 months; and
- Owner occupiers may have to repay grants over £5,000 up to a maximum of £10,000 if the property is sold or transferred within 10 years.

## STEP 5 Installation

You must not start any grant work until you have received your written approval and you are able to pay any contribution. If grant works start before approval, no grant funding will be paid for any works started or completed.

### Arranging a Start Date

You will need to contact your chosen contractor and arrange a start date, if you are using an agent, they will do this on your behalf.

### Contractual Arrangements

There is a contractual arrangement between you and the contractor/agent, there is no contractual arrangement between us and the contractor as we only administer the grant process.

### Extra or unexpected costs

Once your contractor starts work, unforeseen work may be identified. If this happens, you, your contractor or agent must tell the grant officer straightaway, as you will need to get our permission to include this extra work within your grant. Extra work will only be considered if it is unforeseen, essential and prevents the grant works from being completed.

The grant officer may need to visit to find out more, discuss with your contractor and/or agent and be provided with quote before we agree the extra grant amount.

### Expectations

#### Contractors

- Understand they are undertaking works in your home.
- Understand your disabilities may require additional care and consideration.
- Are polite.
- To communicate with you during the process especially when unforeseen works are identified: and
- You are happy at completion.

#### Clients

- Allow the contractor entry.
- Be polite to the contractor.
- Expect some disruption including noise and dust.
- Understand the contractor is there to undertake grant works and not there to undertake additional repairs unless these have been previously agreed.
- To pay all costs incurred if you decide you no longer want the adaptations.

## STEP 6 Completion

### The completion processes

Work must be completed to the satisfaction of you and the Council along with an invoice being received before any payment is made.

### Making your contribution

You will pay this direct to the contractor once you are happy with the work and before we release the grant funding. If you are using an agent, they will advise where any money needs to be sent.

#### What documents are needed?

The contractor must provide you with a final invoice on company headed paper along with all the necessary completion documents (electrical certificate and warranty information). We will need to receive a copy of these documents before making the final payment.

### Arranging payment

We usually pay the contractor (or agent if you are using one) directly, although payment arrangements are made at the application stage. With more costly adaptations, we may make interim payments as work progresses, again invoices need to be provided for each interim payment.

## After Completion

### Charge

For owner occupiers, once your grant has been completed, we'll register a local land charge. It will then appear on any property searches for the next 10-years.

### Annual servicing and maintenance

For certain items including stairlifts you will be responsible for arranging an annual service, the appropriate contact details would have been provided by your contractor. Although in housing association properties they will arrange the servicing.

### If there are problems after the grant has been paid

We are not responsible for any problems that may arise as the contractual arrangement is between you and the contractor

If you do have a problem within the first 12 months, then:

- check any warranties or insurances the contractor has given you; and then
- contact your contractor, explain the problem and what they intend to do.
- Speak with your grant officer.

#### If the problems are not resolved?

If you're not satisfied the contractor has not resolved the problem, contact us and:

- contact Citizens Advice Consumer Service 0808 223 1133 for advice
- If your contractor is on an approved scheme such as Buy with Confidence, contact the scheme operator about your problem. They will review the listing if appropriate.



Grant Officer.....

Tel.....

Email:.....

Tel: 01444 477292

Email: [housingstandards@midsussex.gov.uk](mailto:housingstandards@midsussex.gov.uk)

## Additional Services

### Priority Services Registers (PSR)

Are designed to support people who are over 65, have children under five or are pregnant, have long-term physical or mental health conditions, have a disability or have additional language or communication needs receive extra help if they are without utilities in an emergency or because of planned maintenance. All PSR's are completely free and confidential, it means you'll always get the help you need, particularly in an emergency.

#### How to register

If you're not registered with your water, gas or electricity supplier then please contact them for more information.

Southern Gas Networks also provide a free locking cooker valve to keep people with dementia or autism safe at home, more information can be obtained by calling Careline on 0800 975 1818 or at <https://sgn.co.uk/LCV>

### Reducing Your Energy Costs

#### Where to find help

The Council provides information on support ways to obtain financial support, more information can be found at <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support/>

If you're struggling to pay your energy bills, or living in a cold home, help is available.

<b>West Sussex Citizens Advice Home Energy Telephone Service</b>	
Residents can get FREE tailor-made home energy advice from the Citizens Advice home energy telephone service.	
Call:	0800 145 6879 (Monday to Friday 10am- 4pm)
Email:	<a href="https://www.arunchichestercab.org.uk/email-advice">https://www.arunchichestercab.org.uk/email-advice</a>



Video Appointment	<a href="https://www.arunchichestercab.org.uk/video-appointments">https://www.arunchichestercab.org.uk/video-appointments</a>
Web:	<a href="https://www.arunchichestercab.org.uk/energy">https://www.arunchichestercab.org.uk/energy</a>

<b>Warmer Homes</b>	
Offers a range of energy-efficiency improvements up to £25,000 for eligible Mid Sussex residents until March 2025. Funding is offered on a first-come, first-served basis.	
Call:	0800 038 5737
Email	<a href="mailto:retrofit@warmerhomes.org.uk">retrofit@warmerhomes.org.uk</a>
Web:	<a href="https://www.warmerhomes.org.uk/">https://www.warmerhomes.org.uk/</a>