

HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY - OCTOBER 2002

REVISED DECEMBER 2003 AND SEPTEMBER 2005

The following types of grant and loan assistance are available:

1. **DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS (MANDATORY AND DISCRETIONARY)**

The disabled person must be registered or registerable with Social Services. A recommendation is required from the Occupational Therapist that works are necessary and appropriate for one or more of the following purposes:-

- (a) facilitating access to and from the dwelling or building by the disabled occupant;
- (b) making the dwelling or building safe for the disabled occupant;
- (c) access to the principal family room by the disabled occupant;
- (d) access to or providing a bedroom for the disabled occupant;
- (e) access to or providing a room containing a bath or shower for the disabled occupant or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility;
- (f) access to or providing a room containing a WC for the disabled occupant or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility;
- (g) access to or providing a room containing a wash hand basin for the disabled occupant or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility;
- (h) facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled person;
- (i) improving or providing a heating system for the disabled person;
- (j) facilitating the use of power, light or heat by the disabled person by altering same or by providing additional means of control;
- (k) facilitating access and movement around the dwelling to enable the disabled person to provide care for someone;
- (l) making the dwelling or building suitable for the accommodation, welfare of employment of the disabled person.

The applicant must be either an owner or a tenant.

The disabled person and any partner are means tested to determine the amount of their contribution towards the cost of the works. If the disabled person is a child or young person, the parents are not means tested. There is no limit to the amount of grant. However, an application is only approved if it is considered reasonable and practicable to carry out the relevant works having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling or building.

2. HOUSEPROUD SCHEME

This scheme facilitates loans and provides assistance to the following people:-

- (i) Homeowners aged 60 and over; and
- (ii) homeowners where the household includes a disabled person of any age.

The type of works covered are repairs, improvements and adaptations, e.g.

- replacement windows and doors
- roof renewal
- rewiring
- central heating
- energy efficiency works
- provision of basic amenities and replacement of defective amenities
- general repairs to put a property into a reasonable state of repair
- provision of level access shower
- provision of ground floor facilities, e.g. bedroom and/or bathroom, for a disabled person
- vertical lifts

The three main loan options are:-

- (i) capital release loan;
- (ii) interest only loan;
- (iii) capital and interest repayment loan.

The amount that can be borrowed usually ranges from £3,000 up to 30% of the current value of the property. Should a loan be taken out, there is an absolute guarantee of no repossession while the applicants are living in the property. Furthermore, help is provided throughout the process including:-

- (i) free financial guidance;
- (ii) the services of a Council officer to determine what works are necessary;
- (iii) the selection of a good reliable builder to undertake the work.

Also, the Council will contribute £500 towards the loan set-up costs where it is considered by the Council that the proposed repairs, improvements or adaptations are necessary.

3. COLDBUSTER GRANTS

(A) Local Scheme

- (i) To qualify for the Coldbuster grant an applicant must:-
 - (a) be aged 18 or over on the date of the application for assistance towards energy efficiency works and be disabled or elderly (aged 60 or over) for assistance towards improved heating;
 - (b) be an owner-occupier, private tenant or a Council tenant, or an occupant who occupies the dwelling under a right of exclusive occupation grant for his life or for a period of more than five years;

(c) be in receipt of one of the following benefits:-

Guarantee Pension Credit
Income Support
Housing Benefit
Council Tax Benefit
Income based Job Seeker's Allowance;
Working Tax Credit with an income of less than £15,050 pa
Child Tax Credit with an income of less than £15,050 pa
Disability Living Allowance
Attendance Allowance

(d) have a power or duty to carry out the works; and

(e) have lived in the dwelling for at least three years prior to the application if it is occupied under a right of occupancy.

The Scheme covers the following works:-

- cavity wall insulation
- loft insulation
- draught proofing
- replacement of boiler over 15 years old
- replacement of boiler beyond economic repair (disabled and elderly only)
- improved heating and/or hot water supply (disabled and elderly only)
e.g. mini central heating system
- upgrade of central heating controls
- provision of thermostatic radiator valves if additional controls being installed
- double glazing
- electrical works
- condensation control measures
- extended warranty/maintenance packages for heating systems installed under the scheme

The grant limit is £3,500 on any one application.

The Borough Environmental Health Officer has delegated authority to increase the maximum grant amount up to £4,000 in exceptional circumstances, i.e. it is not possible to undertake works for the particular purpose within the normal grant limit.

(B) The Universal Coldbuster Grant Scheme for South-West London

4. HOME REPAIR GRANTS FOR URGENT WORKS AFFECTING HEALTH AND SAFETY

To qualify for assistance an applicant must:-

(a) be aged 18 or over on the date of the application;

(b) be an owner-occupier or a private tenant, or an occupant who occupies the dwelling under a right of exclusive occupation grant for his life or for a period of more than five years;

(c) be in receipt of one of the following benefits:-

Guarantee Pension Credit
Income Support
Housing Benefit
Council Tax Benefit
Working Tax Credit with an income of less than £15,050 pa
Child Tax Credit with an income of less than £15,050 pa
Disability Living Allowance
Attendance Allowance

(d) have a power or duty to carry out the works; and

(e) have lived in the dwelling for at least three years prior to the application if it is occupied under a right of occupancy.

The type of items that can be grant-aided include:-

- repair of defective stairs and floors
- disrepair to the guarding on balconies
- disrepair to window catches, safety devices or opening lights
- defects to electrical wiring
- severe rising and/or penetrating dampness
- disrepair to drains
- disrepair to basic amenities which necessitates their renewal
- defects to the water supply
- minor structural faults with evidence of continuing movement.

The grant limit is £3,500 on any one application, and there can be no further grant within 3 years of completion of previous grant.

The Borough Environmental Health Officer has delegated authority to increase the maximum grant amount up to £4,000 in exceptional circumstances, i.e. it is not possible to undertake works to eliminate the risk within the normal grant limit.

5. HOME REPAIR GRANTS FOR SMALL SCALE REPAIRS, IMPROVEMENTS AND ADAPTATIONS

To qualify for assistance an applicant must:-

(a) be aged 18 or over on the date of the application;

(b) be an owner-occupier or a private tenant, or an occupant who occupies the dwelling under a right of exclusive occupation grant for his life or for a period of more than three years;;

(c) be disabled or infirm (i.e. frail or suffering from long-term illness);

(d) be in receipt of one of the following benefits:-

Guarantee Pension Credit
Housing Benefit
Council Tax Benefit
Income based Job Seeker's Allowance.
Working Tax Credit with an income of less than £15,050 pa
Child Tax Credit with an income of less than £15,050 pa
Disability Living Allowance
Attendance Allowance

(e) have a power or duty to carry out the works; and

(f) except in the case of adaptations, have lived in the dwelling for at least three years prior to the application if it is occupied under a right of occupancy.

The types of work that can be grant-aided include:-

(a) Repairs

- roof repairs
- repairs to windows and doors
- renewal of defective wiring
- replacement of defective plumbing, e.g. supply pipework, cold water storage tank, hot water cylinder, electric water heaters and gas boilers
- repair or renewal of hazardous paving
- renewal of defective boundary fences and access gates if owned by the applicant and is necessary for security purposes.

(b) Improvements

- provision of safe floor finishes in the kitchen and bathroom
- improved security as recommended by the Crime Prevention Officer
- provision of secondary glazing or double glazing if windows and/or doors are defective.

(c) Adaptations

Adaptations where the applicant is not eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant or where the works are urgently required, e.g. to enable a hospital discharge.

The grant limit is £3,500 on any one application, and there can be no further grant within 3 years of completion of previous grant.

The Borough Environmental Health Officer has delegated authority to increase the maximum grant amount up to £4,000 in exceptional circumstances, i.e. it is not possible to undertake works for the particular purpose within the normal grant limit.

6. LANDLORD'S RENOVATION GRANT (EMPTY HOMES SCHEME)

(A) To qualify for assistance the landlord must:-

- (a) be the freeholder of the property or have a lease with at least five years unexpired at the time of the application; and
- (b) either
 - (i) enter into a nominations agreement with the Council to accept a tenant nominated by the Council, or
 - (ii) enter into an agreement with the Council to lease the property to the Council

for a period of five years on completion of the works.

The grant-aidable works are any works to make the dwelling meet the decent homes standard and to provide means of escape in case of fire or other fire precautions where the dwelling forms part of a 'high risk' house in multiple occupation.

The grant-aidable works also include the provision of new dwellings by the conversion of empty non-residential properties.

The amount of grant is at least 90% of the eligible cost of works where the applicant enters into a nominations agreement and 75% where the applicant enters into a lease back agreement. In both cases the maximum amount of grant is £25,000 per application.

(B) The Empty Property Scheme for South-West London

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Any person invited to apply for a grant before 2 October 2002 under the former policy on house renovation grants must do so before 2 January 2003 in order to qualify under that policy.

All persons who received an invitation to apply for a grant after 1 October 2002 under the former policy must make their application within 3 months of the date thereof in order to qualify under that policy.

ENQUIRIES

Anyone wishing to apply for assistance under the above policy should contact Environmental Health by:

- (a) telephoning 020 8547 5535 or 5536; or
- (b) writing to Environmental Health, Guildhall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT1 1EU; or
- (c) E-mailing EHAdmin@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

APPEALS

Any person aggrieved by a decision under the policy has the right of appeal to the relevant Neighbourhood Committee, and any such appeal should be sent in writing to the Borough Environmental Health Office, Guildhall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT1 1EU.