



Kate Sheehan
Occupational Therapy

Understanding the Disabled Facilities Grant in the Independent Sector

Kate Sheehan
20th May 2026

Kate Sheehan

Occupational Therapist with 39 years of experience working both in the NHS, Social Care and independent sector.

Worked for the last 28 years in the independent sector for case managers, solicitors, individuals, manufacturers, retailers, professional bodies, housing providers and many more.

My clinical area of expertise and passion is accessible housing



Title - yawn



Disabled Facilities Grant -Myth Buster

Can an independent/private OT make a referral for a DFG

Yes

And can fees be charged

Fees ‘....can be considered as capital expenditure if included as part of the whole project costs of the adaptation and carried out and invoiced by a private OT’



Disabled Facilities Grant



Jumping the queue?

Communication - key

Prior to any assessment

- Speak to the Local authority OT Team
- Confirm their process
- Ask what needs to be included in the assessment report
- Ask if there are any additional forms that require completed
- Manage client expectations



communication



Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

Housing Grants,
Construction and
Regeneration Act
1996

Chapter 53, Part
1, 19-24



Housing Grants,
Construction and
Regeneration Act
1996

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/53/part/I/chapter/I/crossheading/disabled-facilities-grants>



Disabled Facilities Grant – understanding the grant requirements

Necessary and appropriate and reasonable and practicable

Reasonable and practicable – this is **only** in “regard to the age and condition” of the property

Necessary and appropriate

Disabled Facilities Grant – understanding the grant requirements

Necessary and appropriate

The DFG Guidance is an excellent resource.

- Purposes
- Nine guiding principles that you should use to inform your assessment.



Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

12 Purposes in the original legislation and an additional one
added after the review of the DFG in 2008

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

(a) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to and from the dwelling or the building in which that dwelling or as in the case maybe, flat is situated



Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

b) Making a dwelling or building safe for the disabled occupant and other persons residing with him



Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

c) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to a room used or **useable** as the principal family room



Adjective meaning fit, convenient, or capable of being used for a specific purpose
Cambridge dictionary

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

d) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room used or useable for sleeping



Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

e) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a lavatory, or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility



Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

f) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a bath or shower (or Both), or facilitating the use of the disabled occupant of such a facility



Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

g) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a wash hand basin, or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility



Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

- h) Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled occupant



Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

- I) Improving the heating system in the dwelling to meet the needs of the disabled occupant or, if there is no existing heating system in the dwelling or such a system is unsuitable for the use by the disabled Occupant providing a heating system suitable to meet his needs

Cooling/air conditioning





Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

j) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant of a source of power, light or heat by altering the position of one or more means of access to or control of the source or by providing additional means of control



Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

k) Facilitating access and movement by the disabled occupant around the dwelling in order to enable him to care for a person who is normally resident in the dwelling and is in need of such care



Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

Access to the garden

Legislation changed in April 2008 so that access to gardens became a specific criterion for entitlement where it was reasonable and practicable to do so



Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

I) Such other purpose as may be specified of the Department for, Housing, Communities and Local Government



Steve Reed MP



Nine guiding principals

1. Need to retain (or restore) dignity
2. Need to have values recognised
3. Need for relief from pain, discomfort, and danger
4. Need to minimise barriers to independence
5. Need for some element of choice



Nine guiding principals

6. Need for good communication as part of giving choice
7. Need for light
8. Particular needs of children: to provide for growth and change; and the need for space
9. Needs of other family members and of the family as a whole



Purposes and guiding principals - importance

Critical to evidence the needs of your client within the purposes of the grant to enable a successful application. Quote nine principals to support your application

Use the legislation wording as the starting point for your recommendation



Back to communication



communication

Report – evidence based

- What do the local Authority want and need
- Have you evidenced what you have considered and discounted and the reasons why. For example, a bath lift or stair climber
- Clear concise clinical reasoning



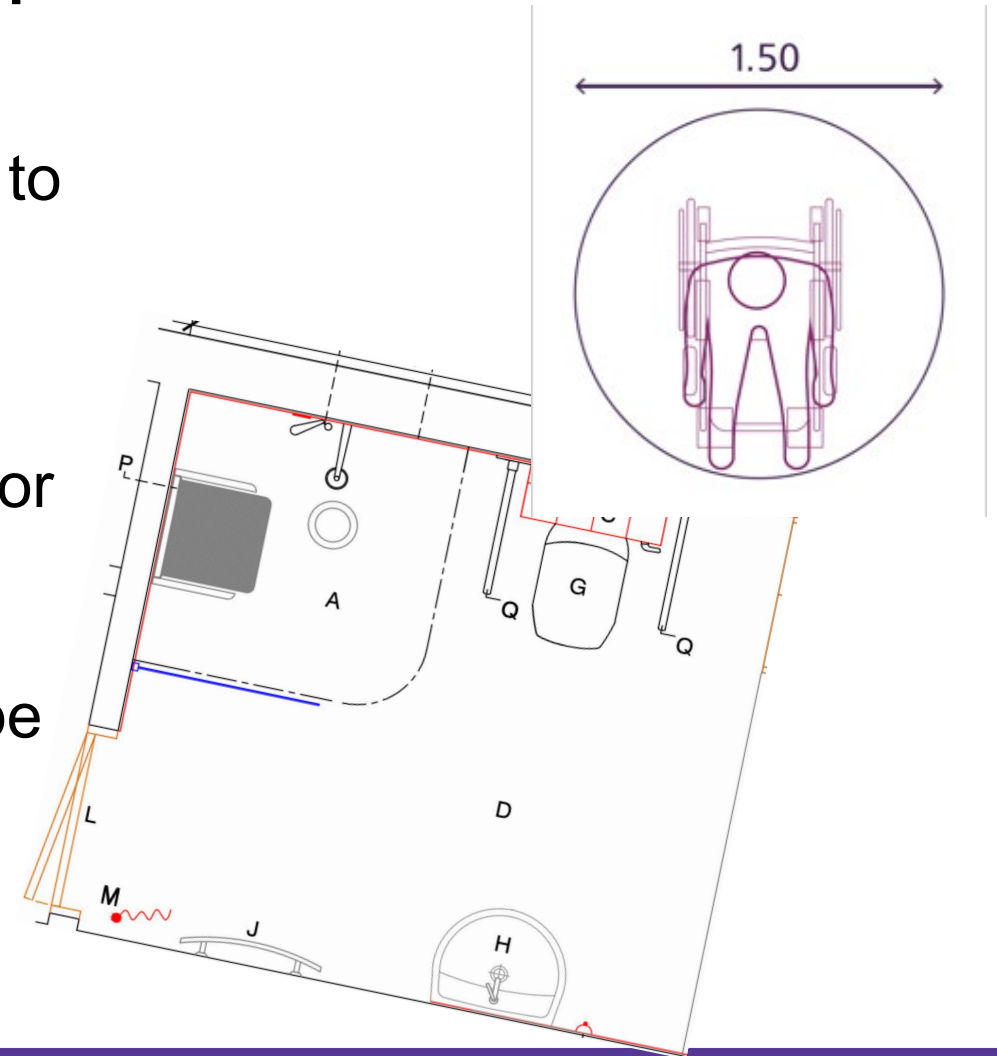
Adaptation - brief/specification

Detailed and clear, to prevent any confusion or poor design



Adaptation - brief/specification

- Clearly define the space your client needs to perform the activity within the purpose e.g. turning circle
- What gradient and platform do they need for ramping
- Layout of the fixtures and fittings need to be arranged to have to support the person to perform the task



Adaptation - brief/specification

- What features do the different fixtures and fittings need to have to support the person to perform the task(s)?
- Clearly identify certain products if they are the only one that meets needs e.g. Geberit or Closomat
- What does the person need with regard to flooring, tiling, lighting, acoustic, heating, and ventilation to help them perform everyday activities?



DFG – private clients

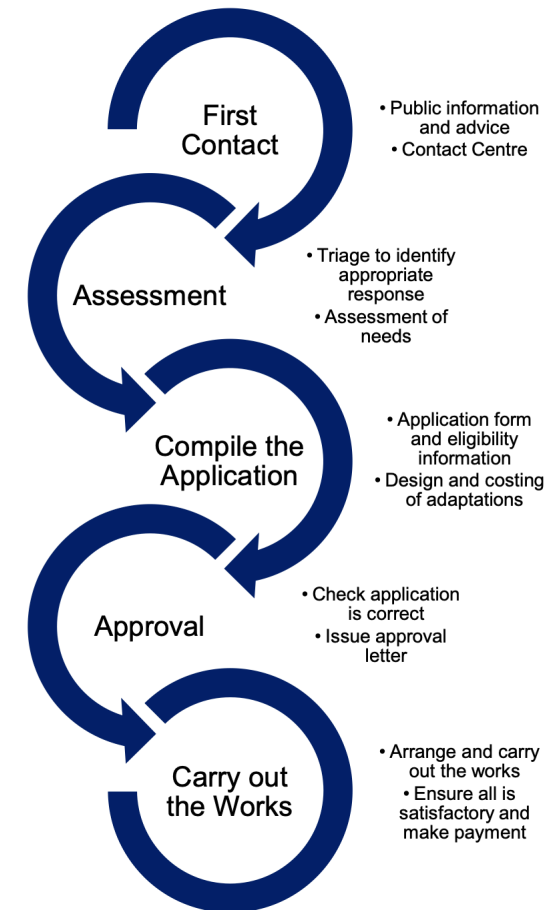
- Expectations
- Understand the means test
- Timeframes
- Choosing a contractor

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



DFG – medical legal claim

- Recourse to public funding
- Defendants may ask if you have accessed statutory services
- Timeframes
- Waiting for forever house – 5 years intention to stay
- Choice and control
- Understand means testing



Case law

Personal Injury Trusts and access to public funding



Judge Auerbach Pic Credit: Law Gazette



Case law

This judgement, R (on the application of CGT) v West Sussex Council [2026] EWHC 293 (Admin)

<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2026/293.html> held that the defendant local authority was unlawful in its decision to deny funding to a seriously injured claimant on the grounds that his monies were subject to a means test, despite the claimant having held the funds in a personal injury trust.

Questions?

