

# Disabled Facilities Grant Priority Pointing Information Sheet

## What is Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Prioritisation called Priority Pointing?

Prior to 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012 applications for a DFG were dealt with in date order. The previous approach, therefore, did not take into account an individual's level of need, risk or urgency.

DFG Priority Pointing is an assessment process, which aims to identify and evaluate the level of need, risk and urgency by taking into account the following:

- the reason why the adaptation is required
- the mobility of the disabled person and their ability to move around their existing home and access the facilities
- if a person has a medical need to access any of the facilities
- the risk to their health and safety should the adaptation be delayed or not carried out
- whether the person is a child or a young person aged under 18 years
- whether or not previous adaptations have been carried out, which partially meet their current needs
- the length of time that the person has been waiting for the adaptation

By adopting this new approach Shropshire Council can ensure that the funding available for DFGs is used to assist those applicants in greatest need.

## Who carries out the assessment?

The assessment is carried out by an Occupational Therapist, who will award points for the various elements listed above. The number of points awarded will determine which **Band** the case will be placed in. These bands are:

- Gold – above 70 points
- Silver – 30 to 69 points
- Bronze – 0 to 29 points

Gold Band cases, will always take priority over Silver Band cases, and Silver Band cases will always take priority over Bronze Band cases. Subject to funding being available, the highest case(s) will be progressed when they reach the top of the Register. It is important to stress that a case does not have to be in the Gold Band to be progressed. If there are no Gold Band cases registered at a particular time, then the highest pointed Silver Band case(s) will be progressed. Similarly, if there

are no Gold or Silver Band cases registered then Bronze Band cases will be progressed.

If a person has been identified as having a specific medical need to access toileting or bathing facilities, e.g. skin conditions or severe incontinence, an additional 15 points will be added to their priority score.

Points are awarded to reflect time waiting. After 6 months have elapsed from the date of registration, an additional 5 points are awarded every month. This ensures that every case can progress through the bands.

Please note that as the Register is live, your position can change from one day to the next, as cases with higher points may be added to the Register.

### **What happens after the assessment?**

Once the Occupational Therapist has carried out the assessment and awarded the appropriate number of points, he/she will make a **referral** to the Grants Officer. This will outline the needs of the disabled person, and may include a brief specification of the works required and a summary of the points that have been awarded. The referral will then be **registered**. The date of registration will be the date that the disabled person first requested assistance from the Council.

### **What happens after the referral has been registered?**

A letter will be sent to the disabled person or to the parent/guardian, in respect of a child or young person, confirming the date that the referral has been registered and the Band awarded. Any queries about the banding should be addressed to the Occupational Therapist who will explain how they arrived at the banding.

In most situations, details of the assessment and any recommended works including details of the banding will then be passed to Mears Shropshire Home Services, the Council's Partner Home Improvement Agency. They will contact the applicant to arrange for a Caseworker to visit. During this visit the Caseworker is able to provide advice and guidance on a range of issues e.g. benefits advice and explain how they can help with the DFG process. They may also request the Grants Officer to carry out a Preliminary Means Test to determine whether or not the disabled person will be expected to pay anything towards the cost of the proposed work. Following the Caseworker's visit, the applicant can then decide if they would like to continue to use the services of Mears Shropshire Home Services or whether they would prefer to engage a private agent to assist them, once they have been advised that the case can be progressed.

For tenants of Severnside Housing, South Shropshire Housing Association and Meres & Mosses Housing Association details of the assessment of needs and any recommended works including details of the banding will then be passed to your Landlord, rather than being referred to Mears Shropshire Home Services.

### **How quickly will the DFG referral be progressed?**

Cases will be dealt with in order of priority, those with the highest number of points being dealt with first. Subject to the availability of funding, cases will be passed through from the Register in order for the technical work to commence. Depending on the circumstances the referral will be passed to Mears Shropshire Home Services or to the applicant's agent (if they have decided not to use Mears Shropshire Home Services). In the case of a tenant of Severnside or South Shropshire Housing Association, the case will be passed to their Technical Team. The DFG referral can then be progressed to the next stage.

This will involve any technical survey work required, drawing up plans, obtaining costs for the work and generally assisting with whatever is required to submit an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant to the Grants Officer in the Private Sector Housing Team at the Council.

On receipt of a valid DFG application the Grants Officer will aim to determine the application within a reasonable time frame.

### **What happens if my circumstances change during the process?**

If the disabled person's circumstances change after the Occupational Therapist's assessment, they should contact the Occupational Therapist to discuss.

### **What happens if someone starts or finishes the work before receiving a formal DFG approval?**

Any works which are carried out before formal DFG approval is issued cannot be paid for through the grant.