

## **Bolton Council**

# Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2021

**Updated February 2021**



# Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy (2021)

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## 1. Introduction

1.1. The Bolton Council Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2021 is made under item 3 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 Statutory Instrument No. 1860. Its publication equipped local authorities with wide ranging powers to set out locally how monies for private sector housing should be spent.

1.2. This policy makes use of those powers set out in Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 to provide a range of assistance that supports the provision of good quality private sector housing and to broaden the scope of Disabled Facilities Grants.

1.3. This policy sets out the range of financial assistance that Bolton Council will make available, together with the eligibility criteria and conditions that will be applied to each form of assistance. This document sets out the policy for providing assistance under the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) and applies in addition to the provision of assistance which can be made under alternative statutory powers, such as the provision of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants under the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended).

1.4. This policy makes provisions for a number of types of assistance:

- Home Improvement Assistance (Safe Warm and Dry)
- Disabled Facilities Grant
- Additional Assistance for Older and Vulnerable People (Housing Repairs Assistance)
- Energy Efficiency Schemes
- Empty Properties
- Environmental Schemes & Facelift Schemes
- Relocation Assistance

1.5. With the exception of Disabled Facilities Grants, the amount of assistance given each year will be dependent upon the level of capital resources available for housing interventions through Bolton Council Capital Programme.

1.6. The amount of funding available for Disabled Facilities Grants will be dependent on Bolton's Better Care Fund allocation from Department of Health.

## 2. Aims of the Policy

2.1. This policy will contribute towards achieving the aims and objectives of a range of Bolton Council and partner strategies.

2.2. The aims are:

- To achieve a reduction in the level of private sector properties which have hazards as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).
- To decrease the number of poor-quality homes that are occupied by vulnerable residents.
- To improve the energy efficiency rating of private sector properties and achieve a reduction in the numbers of private residents suffering from fuel poverty.
- To support the priorities of Health and Social Care Integration through the provision of preventative housing services that assist people to live independently.
- To achieve value for money and the most effective use of public resources through delivering appropriate forms of assistance in partnership with a range of agencies.

### 3. Basic Principles of the Policy

3.1. This policy will be reviewed every two years; but will only be amended when it is necessary to do so.

3.2. If this policy is subject to change, applications will be dealt with in line with the version of this policy that existed on the date of application.

3.3. Bolton Council will continue to investigate a range of measures that provide assistance to applicants in addition to those covered in this policy, which may require this policy to be varied at any time in relation to specific properties and impose different conditions or requirements in respect of those properties.

3.4. In accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002, section 22 of the Housing Act 1996 and section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, Bolton Council may administer certain forms of assistance in partnership with partner agencies and organisations where it determines it is appropriate to do so.

3.5. Where this applies the applicant will be required to provide information specified in this policy to any partner agency in addition to Bolton Council. Bolton Council's Home Improvement Agency privacy notice can be found [here](#).

### 4. General Conditions for Assistance

4.1. A Bolton resident can apply for assistance unless the person is:

- Aged under 18,
- Unable to understand the implications of making an application,
- A public authority,

- A Registered Housing Provider,
- From abroad and excluded from receiving any state benefit.

4.2. Owner occupiers making an application for assistance must be a freeholder or leaseholder with at least five years of the lease remaining and the dwelling must be their only or main residence. Owner occupiers must also have owned and lived in the property for a minimum of three years (not applicable for Disabled Facilities Grants) and the property must be their only or main residence.

4.3. Where the property concerned has been purchased through Right to Buy or Right to Acquire, no assistance will be available until five years after the purchase date and the property must be the only or main residence of the applicant (not applicable for Disabled Facilities Grants).

4.4. Landlords making an application for any assistance outlined in this policy must be a freeholder or leaseholder with at least five years of the lease remaining and the dwelling must be let on a residential basis.

4.5. Private sector tenants making an application for any type of assistance must be able to demonstrate a legal obligation to carry out the works applied for as part of their lease or tenancy agreement. The type and length of tenancy will also be considered before any assistance is awarded.

4.6. Registered Provider tenants or private sector tenants where the landlord is responsible for carrying out repairs are not eligible to apply for assistance. However, Bolton Council will support the tenant in liaising with their landlord to secure the carrying out of any work that the landlord is responsible for.

4.7. Bolton Council may at any time, within ten years of the assistance being provided, require the applicant to provide documentation to prove compliance with any owner occupier or landlord certificate relating to the property.

4.8. No assistance shall be available for a property that has been constructed or converted within ten years of the date of application, except in relation to an application for assistance in respect of an adaptation to benefit a disabled person.

4.9. Assistance will not be provided in respect of properties that are system built or types of property classed as defective by the Government.

4.10. A means test may be carried out on owner occupiers and private sector tenants that make an application for Home Improvement Assistance, Disabled Facilities Grant, or Home Repairs Assistance.

4.11. The maximum amount of assistance available will be no more than £30,000 to any property. This limit does not include Disabled Facilities Grants.

4.12. If a property has already benefitted from previous Council investment within the last five years through Home Improvement Assistance, the amount of previous investment will be taken into consideration when awarding any assistance through this policy (not applicable for Disabled Facilities Grants).

4.13. All property improvements detailed in this policy should be carried out by a contractor included on, or pending inclusion on, the Advisory List of Contractors, comprising of local contractors who have undergone a number of checks including holding relevant insurance liability and signed a code of conduct. Ordinarily three quotes must be obtained for all works to ensure best value.

4.14. In some circumstances, a contractor of the applicant's choice can be considered. However, they must quote for the work alongside two other contractors and the final choice of contractor will at all times be based on best value.

4.15. Where available a procurement framework can be used for adaptations and affordable warmth measures, such as energy efficient boilers and insulation.

4.16. All contracts for the provision of works will be between the applicant receiving the grant and the awarded contractor in all grant assistance schemes.

4.17. Warranties and guarantees must be required where appropriate and it is the responsibility of the grant applicant to ensure regular servicing and/or maintenance is carried following completion of the works.

4.18. In all circumstances, work which has already been started or completed at the time of application will not be eligible for any financial assistance.

4.19. All relevant payments for works completed will normally be made direct to the contractor unless the applicant has specifically requested otherwise. Payments will be made in full once Bolton Council or its partner agency is satisfied that the work has been completed to a reasonable standard.

4.20. Where proposed works to improve a property cannot be completed without similar works being undertaken to an adjoining property, this similar work can be carried out up to a maximum of £3,000. No contribution will be required from the adjoining property owner/occupier for this work and it will only be carried out with the owner's consent. Examples of the work this could include are replacement guttering and repairs to chimneys. This cost will not be included in the grant awarded to the applicant.

4.21. All work paid for or contributed to through the assistance set out in this policy must be completed within 6 months of the work being approved. This does not include Disabled Facilities Grants, which must be completed within 12 months of the works being approved. If Bolton Council is satisfied that the work could not be completed in this time frame, in some circumstances more time may be allowed.

4.22. Repayment of a proportion of Safe, Warm and Dry assistance will be required if, within ten years of any part of the assistance being provided, the property is sold or transferred or there is non-compliance with the owner occupation or landlord certificate (see 4.23. below).

4.23. If assistance must be repaid, the amount that the grant recipient must pay will be:

- 0 to 24 months after assistance – 100%
- 25 to 48 months after assistance – 80%
- 49 to 72 months after assistance – 60%
- 73 to 96 months after assistance – 40%
- 97 to 120 months after assistance – 20%
- More than 120 months – nil repayment

4.24. This amount must be repaid within 28 days of a written request from Bolton Council.

4.25. Repayment of Home Repairs Assistance is detailed in Chapter 7 of this policy.

4.26. At any time within ten years of the assistance being provided, the applicant or any mortgagee of the property can make payment of the full amount of assistance so that restrictions on occupation or transfer no longer apply.

4.27. Nothing is repayable if Bolton Council is satisfied that the reason for disposal is that:

- An Act of Parliament requires it,
- The applicant is moving due to the need for care as a result of old age or poor health,
- The applicant is moving to take care of a family member due to old age or poor health,
- A court order (other than one to enforce a debt or mortgage) requires it.

4.28. The level of assistance offered may be recalculated if:

- Information submitted is found to be inaccurate,
- Work is started before the application is approved,
- Work is not completed to a reasonable the standard expected by Bolton Council,
- Work is not completed within the agree timescales,
- The cost of the work is lower than estimated,
- Specific contractors were not employed when the grant was approved.

4.29. If the level of assistance is recalculated, Bolton Council may:

- Refuse to make any further payments,
- Reduce the amount of the payment,
- Require the applicant to repay with reasonable interest.



4.30. To ensure compliance with all conditions set out by Bolton Council, it will be required that a legal charge by way of a restriction is placed on the property to which the application refers. The cost of this will be paid by Bolton Council.

4.31. Where fraud or deception is suspected the matter will be reported to the police or relevant enforcement agency and Bolton Council will demand full repayment of any amount of assistance paid with the current rate of interest and no further amount will be paid.

4.32. All financial assistance set out within this policy will be available as and when resources are available within associated budgets. In the event of insufficient funds being available, applicants will be advised accordingly, given advice on alternatives and if they choose, be queued in date order until resources become available. In some circumstances an application may be given priority based on the needs and circumstances of the applicant and the priority of the works to be carried out.

#### **4.33. Making an application**

- An application cannot be made until such time as Bolton Council or a partner agency has issued a schedule of works, where appropriate, and issued the application form and relevant certificates to enable an applicant to make the application.
- An application for assistance shall be made in writing using the specified application form.
- An application for assistance must be accompanied by the relevant documentation from those listed below:
  - An owner occupation certificate,
  - A landlord certificate,
  - A form of consent signed by all named owners of the property, Any additional documentation required by Bolton Council or its delivery partners in order to progress the application.
- The applicant will be given appropriate advice and time to consider any offer of assistance and must be willing to accept the assistance offered subject to any conditions set by Bolton Council.
- Bolton Council will make a decision on each application within 6 months of a full and complete application being received.

#### 4.34. Awarding of assistance

- Decisions as to the awarding of assistance will be taken by appropriately experienced officers of Bolton Council or its partners who have been appointed as suitable to administer schemes run in accordance with this policy.
- In exceptional and complex cases, a panel of management representatives from Bolton Council and the commissioned agent, Occupational Therapists (or Trusted Assessor), Case Officers, Surveyors and any other professional body involved in the case will also attend when appropriate to discuss cases that fall into the remit of the panel.
- Terms of Reference for a management panel have been developed and agreed with stakeholders and can be found in Appendix 3.
- The role of the panel is to ensure partnership working, enabling the services involved to meet legislative duties relating to Disabled Facilities Grants efficiently, effectively, consistently and review the wider impacts on health and social care. Decisions will be reached at panel meetings using the legislation and policy as guidance and will be documented and communicated to the applicant, or their family/carers.
- A panel would be established when required for other housing interventions as set out in the policy that are complex and/ or high cost. The role of the panels is to ensure partnership working enabling the services involved to meet legislative duties relating to the housing interventions, efficiently, effectively, consistently and review the wider health and social care implications. The panel would follow the Disabled Facilities Grants panel process and include Social Workers and/or any professionals supporting the applicant.
- Applicants can provide written information to the panel but will not be able to attend a panel meeting, as it may not be only their case which will be discussed at the panel.
- Any decision made by a panel can be challenged through the complaints process detailed in section 12.

## 5. Home Improvement Assistance (Safe Warm and Dry)

5.1. The provisions for financial assistance contained within this section must be read in conjunction with the General Provisions for Assistance set out in section 4.

5.2. Home Improvement Assistance will be available to owner occupiers living in poor condition private sector homes.

5.3. Provision of this assistance will be targeted using Bolton Council and partner data to identify properties which are at high risk of being in a poor condition and occupied by a vulnerable resident.

5.4. “Vulnerable residents” may include, but are not limited to, those in receipt of ‘passport’ benefits, those in receipt of other means tested benefits, older people on a low income, people with disabilities on a low income, families with young children on a low income and people with a long term illness on a low income. This criterion is subject to change in line with Bolton Council priorities.

5.5. The approaches taken to targeting of this assistance will be based on decision of Bolton Council and its partners.

5.6. The assistance is only for the purpose of financing home improvement works identified to remove HHSRS hazards and make the property ‘Safe Warm and Dry’.

5.7. Each property will be subject to a £30,000 cap of expenditure on improvements, in line with current housing grant limits. If households wish to make further improvements, they will be responsible for finding the resources to do so.

5.8. In all cases Bolton Council will carry out a housing options appraisal with applicants that will consider the sustainability of their current residence, taking into account their current and future housing needs.

5.9. In some cases, Bolton Council may decide that financial assistance is not appropriate to the circumstances and the applicant will be asked to consider alternative housing arrangements. This will occur in all cases where the cost of repair exceeds the maximum value of the type of assistance offered.

5.10. In all cases where any grant assistance is provided, the officer working on behalf of Bolton Council will complete a holistic home assessment to establish any further housing related issues.

5.11. In deciding what financial assistance may be available, Bolton Council will carry out a means test in the same form as set out in the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 (as amended). This will assess the income, outgoings and capital assets of each applicant and their spouse or partner and non-resident owners. The means test will identify whether an applicant is vulnerable and whether they will be required to make any financial contribution towards the home improvement works.

5.12. The value of the Home Improvement Assistance will be secured on the identified property via the land registry for a period of ten years, in line with the General Provisions for Assistance in section 4.

5.13. Repayment of the charge will be sought if the applicant does not comply with the conditions relating to ownership or occupation set out in the General Conditions of Assistance in section 4.

5.14. To qualify for Home Improvement Assistance the applicant will need to prove receipt of the qualifying benefits or undertake an assessment, dependent on individual circumstances.

## 6. Disabled Facilities Grants

6.1. A Disabled Facilities Grant is a mandatory grant set out in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, as amended by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.

6.2. The majority of provisions for this assistance are not set out in this policy as they are laid down in statute. However, schemes that make use of the flexibilities afforded under the Regulatory Reform Order are set out within this section.

6.3. The purpose of a Disabled Facilities Grant is to help to ensure that people with a disability can continue to live independently and safely within their own property. Only works that are 'necessary and appropriate' to meet the needs of the disabled person as identified and referred by an Occupational Therapist or Trusted Assessor will be eligible for Disabled Facilities Grant funding.

### Major Adaptations

6.4. Assistance to provide major adaptations will be delivered in line with the way the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended) requires.

6.5. In deciding whether an applicant qualifies for assistance under a Disabled Facilities Grant, Bolton Council will carry out a means test in the same form as set out in the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 (as amended). This will assess the income, outgoings and capital assets of each applicant and their spouse or partner and non-resident owners. The means test will identify whether an applicant will be required to make any financial contribution towards the necessary works.

6.6. The means test will not apply to cases which are assessed as being 'Priority 1' (as determined by the Occupational Therapist), with the exception of applications requiring an extension.

6.7. Priority levels are determined by the Occupational Therapist using the following criteria:

- P1 - Clients who have a time limiting condition or whose discharge from specialist units is delayed because of a lack of adaptation.

- P2 - For clients with severe degenerative conditions or where their discharge from residential care is delayed. Where there is a health and safety concern, particularly for the carer, because of the lack of an adaptation.
- P3 - To give independence in their activities of daily living to the disabled person.

6.8. The means test may also not be applied in cases involving 'non-complex' adaptations. This will include, but not be limited to; door widening, stair lifts, through floor lifts, level access showers and ramps. A maximum total figure of £10,000 (pending approval) per grant application will be used to determine whether the means test should be applied.

6.9. The minimum amount of Disabled Facilities Grant that can be awarded is £1000.

6.10. As of 22nd May 2008, Local Authorities are, in certain circumstances, able to demand repayment of part of the Disabled Facilities Grant which has been awarded to the applicant. This power permits the Local Authority to seek repayment where the Disabled Facilities Grant exceeds £5,000. The amount that is repayable is limited to £10,000. The grant will be repayable to Bolton Council if the applicant disposes of the adapted property (by sale, transfer, assignment or otherwise) within 10 years of the certified grant completion date.

6.11. Bolton Council will seek to use this provision under the General Consent Order 2008 and the RRO flexibilities in cases only where the Disabled Facilities Grant includes an extension to the applicant's property and/ or awarded discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant top up and will be secured at Land Registry by way of a restriction.

6.12. In all cases Bolton Council will carry out a housing options appraisal with applicants that will consider the sustainability of their current residence, taking into account their current and future housing needs.

6.13. In some cases, Bolton Council may decide that Disabled Facilities Grant assistance is not the most sustainable solution and the applicant will be asked to consider alternative housing arrangements. This will occur in all cases where the cost of repair exceeds the maximum value of the type of assistance offered.

6.14. Where the applicant is unable to purchase an alternative property or is not an owner occupier, Bolton Council may seek to secure alternative suitable accommodation for the applicant through its strategic delivery partners, including its Registered Provider partners.

6.15. Where an applicant requires an adaptation that costs in excess of the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant limit, a Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant Top Up Grant may be awarded. The value of the additional works may be applied as a legal charge secured against the property. Such a charge would be registered at Land Registry in the form of a restriction.

6.16. The maximum of any Discretionary Top Up grant will be £20,000 (pending approval).

6.17. In some cases where an applicant has a means tested Disabled Facilities Grant contribution that would cause undue hardship, a Discretionary Top Up grant can be applied.

6.18. In these exceptional cases, the decision will be made by Bolton Council and its partners forming the panel as referenced in section 4 of this policy.

6.19. Provision of a major adaptation which has a direct impact on a Delayed Transfer of Care will be, on notification, treated as 'Priority 1' and delivered within 30 days. This does not apply to cases which involve an extension to an existing property.

6.20. Provision of a major adaptation which will directly prevent an admission to hospital will be, on notification, treated as 'Priority 1' (as determined by the Occupational Therapist) and delivered within 30 days. This does not apply to cases which involve an extension to an existing property.

#### Technology Enabled Care

6.21. Assistance will be made available to provide Technology Enabled Care such as telehealth, telecare.

6.22. Decision on the scope and specification of the Technology Enabled Care will be made on an individual basis and at the discretion of Bolton Council and its partners.

#### New build specialist housing

6.22. Assistance will be made available to support the development of new build specialist accommodation which supports independent living if there is a viability gap. Providers will need to demonstrate there is an identified need for such accommodation and that it is supported by the Social Care Commissioning Team.

6.23 Decisions on the scope and level of funding will be made on an individual basis and Providers will be required to provide a full financial appraisal for the scheme. Further formal approvals may be required.

## 7. Additional Assistance for Older and Vulnerable People

7.1. The provisions for financial assistance contained within this section must be read in conjunction with the General Provisions for Assistance set out in Chapter 4.

7.2. The Home Improvement Agency, Bolton Care and Repair, provides services for vulnerable older and disabled owner occupiers and private rented tenants. It provides

support and advice to applicants who wish to make repairs and improvements to their home.

7.3. Support and assistance provided to applicants includes:

#### **7.3.1 Home Repairs Assistance**

7.3.1.1 Home Repairs Assistance is available to owner occupiers and private sector tenants, if they can demonstrate that they have the repairing obligation, as defined in Appendix 4.

7.3.1.2 The assistance will contribute towards minor home repair works to enable the applicant to remain living independently and safely at home, for example, roof repairs, dampness, replacing external windows and doors, upgrading or rewiring of electrics.

7.3.1.3 The maximum level of assistance available through a Home Repairs Assistance Grant is £5,000 in any three-year period.

7.3.1.4 Repayment of a proportion of assistance will be required if, within five years of any part of the assistance being provided, the property is sold or transferred or there is non-compliance with the owner occupation or landlord certificate (see 7.3.1.5 below).

7.3.1.5 If assistance must be repaid, the amount that you must pay will be:

- 0 to 12 months after assistance – 100%
- 13 to 24 months after assistance – 80%
- 25 to 36 months after assistance – 60%
- 37 to 48 months after assistance – 40%
- 49 to 60 months after assistance – 20%
- More than 60 months after assistance – nil

7.3.1.6 This amount must be repaid within 28 days of a written request from Bolton Council.

#### **7.3.2 Handyman Scheme**

7.3.2.1 The Handyman scheme will be provided to owner occupiers and private sector tenants as defined in Appendix 4, who require small repairs and improvements to be carried out. There will be an hourly charge incurred for use of the Handyman service, plus any materials required. The Handyman service will provide boiler and gas servicing to owner occupiers only.

7.3.1.7 All services subsidised are subject to funds being available.

7.3.1.8 The Handyperson Service is limited to 2 appointments per month per household. This can be increased subject to availability.

## 8. Energy Efficiency Schemes

8.1. Bolton Council will offer schemes to owner occupiers and private tenants to improve the energy efficiency of their home. Assistance will be made in line with the relevant eligibility criteria of the schemes available from both Bolton Council and partner organisations.

8.2. The Better Behaving Boiler scheme, is delivered by Bolton Care and Repair, provides heating repairs or replacement heating systems up to a value of £1,500.

8.3. Assistance is available to owner occupiers on qualifying benefits, as set out in Appendix 1. In these cases, the existing heating system must be old, inefficient or broken or the applicant must have no central heating system.

8.4. Assistance will also be made available to owner occupiers suffering with a qualifying long-term health condition as set out in Appendix 2. In these cases, the existing heating system must be old, inefficient or broken or the applicant must have no central heating system. The applicant must also live in a property which is Council Tax band A – C.

8.5. Additional energy efficiency schemes that may be available could include measures such as:

- Cavity wall insulation,
- External Wall Insulation,
- Loft insulation,
- Repairs to existing heating systems,
- Replacement windows and doors.

8.6. Owner occupiers or tenants will not usually be expected to contribute to or repay the costs of any energy efficiency schemes, unless requested works are over and above the standard eligible expense. However, in cases where a contribution or repayment is required, this will be explained, and total costs given at the first available opportunity.

## 9. Empty Properties



- 9.1. The provisions for financial assistance contained within this section must be read in conjunction with the General Provisions for Assistance set out in Chapter 4.
- 9.2. Owners of empty properties, as identified through Council Tax records and through work with Housing Standards, will be offered support and advice to assist with bringing their property back into use.
- 9.3. Support and advice will be administered by Housing Standards within their existing engagement and enforcement procedures.
- 9.4. For owners, whose properties require improvement and investment to bring back to a habitable condition, financial assistance may be offered.
- 9.5. Decisions on which empty properties will benefit from any assistance outlined in this section will be taken by Bolton Council and its partners in line with agreed criteria and due diligence checks, which will be disclosed to the applicant.
- 9.6. In all cases, an assessment will be undertaken which will consider visual impact, complaints, length of time empty, ongoing case work and other risk factors to be applied at the discretion of Bolton Council.

#### Owner-led scheme

- 9.7. Assistance will be made available to owners of long-term empty properties to bring the property back to a habitable condition if they meet the relevant criteria and budget allows.
- 9.8. Works required to bring the property back into a habitable condition will be determined by a qualified surveyor employed on behalf of Bolton Council.
- 9.9. The maximum value of works available for assistance is £20,000. This loan is secured on the property and requires permission from the mortgage provider (if the property is mortgaged), this loan is then registered at the land registry as a charge against the property (as security).
- 9.10. Assistance will be made available by means of a loan repayable to Bolton Council. Detail and terms of this loan are available in Schedule 1 of the Loan Agreement, of which the terms and conditions will be disclosed to the applicant.
- 9.11. On completion of the identified works, the property must become occupied by the owner's tenant.

9.12. If the property owner fails to comply with any element of the Loan Agreement, including terms relating to ongoing occupation, Bolton Council will seek reimbursement of the full loan amount.

### Improvements to external appearance

9.13. Properties which have the greatest impact on the local amenity and those that attract frequent complaints will be prioritised for action.

9.14. If owners fail to work with Bolton Council to improve the appearance of properties works may be carried out in default to make improvements to the property using Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

9.15. The costs of work to each individual property will be determined on a case by case basis depending on the scale of the improvements required. The works will be carried out in default if the applied legal notice is not complied. The works will be invoiced to the owners and is to be repaid to the Council. The work in default is subject to available budgets and is secured via a local land charge. The local land charge will be removed following full repayment of the value of the works.

## 10. Environmental Schemes and Facelift Schemes

10.1. Environmental Schemes and Facelift Schemes deal with visual impact or safety improvements to properties within a designated area.

10.2. An example of an environmental scheme would be the rebuilding of boundary walls of properties or installation of affordable warmth and energy efficiency measures an example would be external wall insulation.

10.3. An example of a facelift scheme would be the replacement of gutters, windows, external doors and the rebuilding of boundary walls.

10.4. Environmental and Facelift Schemes are available to owner occupiers and private landlords in blocks which have been agreed to benefit from such investment.

10.5. Private landlords will be required to comply with any set criteria as per required to access funding (either set by Bolton Council or an external grant funding provider) as a condition of making an application for Environmental or Facelift works, and no application will be approved until this has happened.

10.6. Decisions on which blocks may benefit will be taken by Bolton Council on completion of an assessment with regard to the condition of properties, visual impact of properties and potential need for housing market stabilisation.

10.7. Schedules of works for such schemes will be determined by Bolton Council or its partner agency on a block by block basis taking account of resident consultation, property condition and local environmental issues.

10.8. No means test will be applied to an owner of a property within an Environmental or Facelift Scheme.

10.9. Owners or occupiers will not usually be expected to make a contribution to the costs of Environmental or Facelift Schemes. However, where this is the case, this will be explained at the scheme design stage and the total cost of contribution will be divided appropriately between all applicants taking part in the scheme.

## 11. Relocation Assistance

11.1. Bolton Council will consider giving assistance for relocation to a disabled person whose existing property is unsuitable for improvement or adaptation.

11.2. The new property must be inspected by Bolton Council prior to the grant being awarded and also by an occupational therapist to assess suitability of the property against the applicant's needs.

11.3. Costs that will be covered through Relocation Assistance include:

- Estate agent fees,
- Solicitors fees,
- Stamp duty,
- Difference in purchase price (up to a maximum of £10,000).

11.4. The maximum grant amount allowed for combined Relocation Assistance and Disabled Facilities Grant is £30,000.

## 12. Complaints

12.1. Bolton Council operates a [Corporate Complaints Procedure](#) that exists for receiving and processing complaints from members of the public in respect of all council services.

12.2. Complaints regarding policy will be processed through Bolton Council.

12.3. Complaints regarding the delivery of the policy will be processed by Bolton Council's commissioned agents with oversight from Bolton Council.

12.4. Complaints to Bolton Council should be made within a reasonable time frame of the event which caused the complaint to occur. In most cases 12 months is regarded as the appropriate limitation period.

12.5. All written complaints will be acknowledged within five working days (24 hours for an email), a full response will be provided within 14 calendar days but if Bolton Council is unable to reply within this time, the applicant will be contacted with the reason why and timescales in which to expect a full response.

12.6. If applicants are not satisfied with the response, there is opportunity to appeal in writing within 28 calendar days to the Chief Executive. The complaint will be reviewed by the Departmental Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Departmental Director.

12.7. Any complaints about the administration of this policy will be dealt with through this Corporate Procedure, in line with the provisions set out therein.

## Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2021

### APPENDIX 1 Eligible benefits for Better Behaving Boiler Scheme

Aged 65 or over, vulnerable or living with a disability.

- Guaranteed and saving pension credit
- Council Tax benefit
- Contribution based JSA
- Income support

#### All other applicants

- Income related ESA
- Contribution related ESA
- Income based JSA
- Contribution based JSA
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Council Tax benefit
- War disablement pension (must include mobility support or constant attendance)
- Income support
- Pension credit
- Attendance allowance- must be in Council Tax band A, B or C
- Disability living allowance- must be in Council Tax band A, B or C
- PIP- must be in Council Tax band A, B or C
- Must have health professional support and be in Council tax band A B or C

## APPENDIX 2 Qualifying long term health conditions that are caused or exacerbated by living in a cold home for Better Behaving Boiler Scheme

### *Respiratory diseases*

#### Examples

- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- Emphysema
- Asthma
- Bronchitis
- Cystic Fibrosis

### *Cardiovascular diseases*

#### Examples

- Angina
- Hypertension
- Myocardial Infarction (heart attack)
- Cerebral Vascular Accident (stroke)

### *Musculoskeletal diseases*

#### Examples

- Arthritis
- Back pain (long term, severe)
- Damaged joint

### *Mental Health issues*

This is not an exhaustive list of conditions affected by living in a cold home. However, whether a patient's condition may be exacerbated by the cold, making them eligible for the scheme, is ultimately at the GP or Pharmacist's discretion

Or eligibility through the GMCA Energy Company Obligation Local Authority Flexibility Eligibility Statement of Intent, which can be found here [SOI](#).

APPENDIX 3 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) / Other Housing interventions Exceptional and complex cases - Panel to review cases and agree way forward taking into account the following

To include:

- If an application exceeds the mandatory DFG amount
- If an application has multiple interventions,
- If other solutions may be applicable,
- If the application is not suitable for adaptation,
- If the application deviates from the policy,
- If the child applicant parents have joint custody
- If the application is deemed to be complex in any way by any service involved
- Consider the cost savings to social care and health

## APPENDIX 4. Eligible criteria and definitions for each grant summary

<b>Service</b>	<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Disabled</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Health / Vulnerable</b>
Handyperson	Owner Occupier and Private Rented Tenant	65 OR meets another criterion	If under age criterion must be in receipt of DLA or PIP	N/A	If under age criterion must be vulnerable as defined by Bolton Council following a referral
Safe, Warm and Dry Grant	Owner Occupier only and lived in the property for 3 years + or 5 years + if right to buy	Over 18	Yes, subject to a means test OR	Yes, as listed in appendix 1	N/A
Home Repairs Assistance Grant	Owner Occupier only	65	N/A	In receipt of Pension tax credit or Guaranteed Pension Credit	N/A
Disabled Facilities Grant	Owner Occupier, Private Rented Tenant or Housing Association	As defined in legislation			
Better Behaving Boiler	Owner Occupier	Over 18	Yes OR (see income and health/ vulnerable)	as listed in appendix 1	as listed in appendix 2



## APPENDIX 5 Grant conditions summary

### Glossary:

DFG - Disabled Facilities Grant

HIA- Home Improvement Assistance

HRA- Home Repairs Assistance

BBB- Better Behaving Boiler

Assistance Type	Value	Means Test	Local Land Charge	Years placed	
Mandatory DFG*	Up to £30,000	Yes, for Adults	Yes (GCO)	10	
*Note 1 & 2		Dependable Adults, Private Rented Tenants and Housing Association tenants	No	N/A	
		No for Children	No	N/A	
(Mandatory DFG) Non-complex work *	Up to £10,000	No	No	N/A	
*Note 1 & 3					
Discretionary DFG *	Up to £20,000	Yes	Yes	10	
*Note 1 & 5					
SWD	Up to £30,000	Yes	Yes	10 years	
*Note 5					
HRA	Up to £5,000	Yes	Yes	5 years	
*Note 4					
BBB	Up to £1,500	Yes	No	N/A	

1. There is a requirement for all applicants to state they intend to live in the property for up to five years from approval of grant assistance.

2. The General Consent Order only applies to mandatory DFG assistance over £5k and Bolton Council can only request repayment up to £10k maximum.
3. Works include any straight/ curved stairlifts, Level Access Showers, or other non-complex works under £10,000.
4. The discretionary assistance will be repaid when ownership is transferred, or the property sold/ disposed within 5 years of completion of works. (4.27 for exceptions)
5. The discretionary assistance will be repaid when ownership is transferred, or the property sold/ disposed within 10 years of completion of works. (4.27 for exceptions)