

# HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY

(2023 – 2026)



**Draft June 2023**

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Policy is to set out the principles by which Derbyshire Dales District Council will assist owner-occupiers, tenants and landlords in the private sector with housing renewals in light of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 made by Government on 18 July 2002 and the changes introduced by the Housing Act 2004 in April 2006.

The Regulatory Reform Order repealed much of the previous prescriptive range of home improvement grants, together with the associated detailed rules, procedures and conditions. The exception to this statement is the system of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, which remains largely unaltered. To replace the previous prescriptive grant system the Council now has a general power to provide grants, loans, advice, materials, or to directly carry out works, for the purpose of repairing, improving, extending, converting or adapting housing accommodation. The Council also has discretion to decide on rates of grant, grant conditions and all other such issues

The Housing Act 2004 introduced new methods of enforcing housing standards, including the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and the mandatory licensing of certain types of houses in multiple occupation.

## LINKS TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

This Housing Renewal Policy forms an integral part of the Council's wider Housing Strategy and through it links with corporate objectives. In particular private sector housing renewal contributes to:

Affordable, decent housing (**Corporate Plan**)

Enabling independent living (**Corporate Plan**)

Providing adaptations to the homes of disabled people (**Corporate Plan**)

Improving energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty (**Home Energy Conservation Act Report and Action Plan**)

## PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

Government has made it clear with previous renewal policies that the responsibility to maintain private property rests firmly with the owner. Therefore it is not desirable for the District Council to offer assistance for all private sector housing problems. In addition financial constraints are such that this would not be possible even if it were desirable. Nevertheless it is recognised that the private sector housing stock is a major public asset. Previously the District Council has offered assistance as a form of investment for long-term public benefit as well as to directly assist vulnerable groups to remain in their own homes and to address certain high priority themes.

The total amount of assistance that can be offered is directly related to the levels of funding that are available. Derbyshire Dales District Council will work to ensure that it levers in the maximum amount of finance from all sectors to make the best improvement in private sector housing conditions that it can. In the past the majority of this funding has come from the Department for Communities and Local Government via the Regional Housing Group. In more recent times this source of funding has ceased and as a consequence there is currently no general discretionary housing grant fund.

Derbyshire Dales District Council will continue to investigate sources of funding for one-off housing projects and for low-level repairs. As and when these funding streams become available the Housing Renewal Policy will be updated to reflect their availability.

Derbyshire Dales District Council does not suffer from well-defined, large-scale areas of housing disrepair. Properties in poor repair tend to be scattered around the district, either individually or in small pockets. For this reason it is difficult to adopt a Policy that is based on a large-scale area renewal approach (which is not to say that small 'group repair' schemes would not be appropriate in certain circumstances). The Council is committed to the collection of housing data through the commissioning of local house condition surveys from time-to-time and as funding allows. The last such survey was undertaken in 2019/20 and finalised in August 2020.

The priorities for assistance set out in this Policy have been informed by the principles set out in the Council's Housing Strategy, by Central Government priorities and by previous renewal approaches. They may be summarised as follows:

- The provision of affordable housing;
- Adapting homes for disabled residents.
- Addressing category 1 hazards under the HHSRS;
- Removing households from fuel poverty;
- Bringing empty properties and under-used properties back into use;
- Dealing with local housing problems;

Whilst the provision of affordable housing is addressed by other means this Policy sets out the mechanisms by which the Council will achieve the other priorities and outlines the general procedures to be followed. The detailed procedures and conditions are contained in a series of appendices to this Policy. In this way it will be easier to add, amend and remove mechanisms as they are developed or taken out of use.

## REVIEWING THE POLICY

The Policy will be reviewed formally at annual intervals to ensure that it remains responsive to local needs and makes best use of the funding available. However, the Policy is a 'live' document and it is intended that the mechanisms by which the Council offers assistance will be kept under development throughout the life of the Policy. The modular nature of the appendices will enable the removal and addition of ways of offering assistance as new mechanisms become available and are tested. As such, revisions may be made at any time.

## MAIN PRIORITIES FOR ASSISTANCE

As stated above the Council has identified 6 priorities for assistance and intends to address them as follows:

### 1. Adapting Homes for Disabled Residents

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants will continue to be provided to adapt the homes of disabled people so that their needs are met. Typical works include the installation of stairlifts and bathroom adaptations. The Council works closely with Derbyshire County Council Social Services and Architects in order to ensure that the best possible service is offered.

Discretionary grants will continue to be offered as finances permit. Prior to the Covid 19 pandemic the level of funding had only allowed the Council to offer mandatory DFG, however, since then reductions in demand have enabled significant reserves to be built up and it is now possible to consider the use of these reserves to fund other interventions that contribute to the aims of the Better Care Fund, from which DFG funding is derived. As DFG funding is provided through the Better Care Fund and is monitored locally by the Better Care Fund Board, any spend other than on mandatory DFG has to be approved and then monitored through the Board.

### 2. Addressing Category 1 Hazards

The Housing Act 2004 changed the way in which local authorities enforce housing standards. The long-established fitness standard was replaced by a system called the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Under this system any housing defects have to be considered in relation to 29 separate hazards and a process undertaken to determine how likely the hazards are to result in harm. A score is allocated and action may be taken depending upon which category the hazard falls into. Some form of enforcement action must be taken for category 1 hazards, whereas enforcement action is discretionary for category 2 hazards.

Derbyshire Dales District Council will use the full range of enforcement tools to ensure that hazards are remedied in the most appropriate manner, in line with its Enforcement Policy.

### 3. Removing Households from Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty is the set of circumstances where a lower income household is living in a home that they cannot afford to keep warm at reasonable cost. Households in fuel poverty are likely to live in non-decent homes, as the Decent Homes Standard requires a dwelling to have reasonable levels of thermal comfort. For a number of years the Government's main route for bring vulnerable households out of fuel poverty has been by imposing and

regulating the Energy Company Obligation, but recently additional funding has been made available to improve the energy efficiency of private housing initially through the Green Homes Grant and latterly through local authorities via a competitive bidding process.

This Strategy sets out the ways in which Derbyshire Dales District Council will try to help those households who are in fuel poverty to access the means by which they can be removed from fuel poverty. In the main this is through strategic intervention with the Local Authorities' Energy Partnership and other partners to shape the schemes that are on offer, and by then signposting to those services.

In addition the Council will continue to offer advice and referral services to all, regardless of whether they are fuel poor or fuel rich.

#### **4. Empty Properties**

Empty properties often attract vandalism, crime, and rubbish dumping and can easily become detrimental to the amenity of an area. They are also a waste of valuable housing accommodation. Within the Derbyshire Dales there are approximately 400 to 500 long-term empty properties at any one time. Their re-use can reduce pressure for development on Greenfield sites and contribute towards sustainable development.

This Strategy indicates the ways in which the Council will bring these properties back into use. In addition the Council will use the full range of enforcement tools to secure the re-use of empty property, including the provision of advice, the use of Empty Dwelling Management Orders and, where appropriate, the use of enforced sale and compulsory purchase powers. The District Council intends applying the Council Tax premium on long-term empty properties from April 2019.

Actions in relation to empty properties are managed across the District Council through a cross-departmental Hub.

#### **5. Dealing with Local Housing Problems**

Where local issues arise that have an impact on the housing stock this Policy will be used to formulate and monitor appropriate responses. In the past much work has been done in connection with radon in homes and whilst this issue has declined in profile in recent years this Policy enables the District Council to respond to other local housing problems as appropriate and to amend this Policy to ensure that its actions are effective in tackling them as they emerge.

## **GRANTS AND OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE**

In recent times the amount of recurrent funding available to the District Council to provide home improvement grants has reduced dramatically. As a consequence the only housing grant funding that is now available on a regular basis is Disabled Facilities Grant.

The District Council will continue to look for sources of funding as they become available and this Policy will be amended as and when any such funding becomes available.

The information below provides an oversight of the funding available at the current time.

### **1. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)**

These are the only grants remaining that are mandatory and the rules for their provision are given in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and further explained in the publication 'Delivering Housing Adaptations for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide' issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Provision is made to undertake works above and beyond those required by the mandatory system. Both mandatory and discretionary assistance are explained in detail in Appendix A.

DFGs are provided to adapt the homes of disabled people to meet their needs. The need for the adaptation is determined by an occupational therapist (OT) from Derbyshire County Council Social Services Department. Applications for grant will only be considered following a recommendation from an OT. All such applications will be assessed by the Council's Public Health and Housing Team to ensure that the work is necessary and appropriate.

DFGs may also be provided to assist disabled people to move to a more suitable property where this is more cost effective than adapting their current properties.

All DFG applications are subject to a test of the financial resources of the grant applicant. The form of this test is prescribed in legislation and is not under the control of the Council. Applicants will be screened using a 'cut-down' preliminary test of financial resources where appropriate, before progressing to a full test at the time of formal application, in order to simplify the process for applicants.

The grants cover any reasonable costs in excess of the applicant's assessed contribution, subject to a mandatory grant limit of £30,000.

To be referred for a DFG assessment applicants should contact Derbyshire County Council's Call Derbyshire on:

Telephone: 01629 533190

### **2. Affordable Warmth Support**

The District Council is committed to helping residents to be able to live comfortably in their own homes. The resource that the Council is able to provide towards this issue is mainly strategic in nature and most actual interventions are provided through other agencies. In particular the Council is a member of the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Local Authorities' Energy Partnership (LAEP) and is able to make use of the Healthy Homes scheme provided through Derbyshire County Council's Public Health service.

Wherever possible the District Council will look to take advantage of funding provided through schemes such as the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and will support residents through the ECO scheme via a partnership with Derbyshire County Council. The Council has jointly published a statement of intent for delivery of the scheme and this statement currently sets out the Council's flexible eligibility criteria for the latest iteration of the scheme, ECO4, which will be delivered until March 2026.

The Council will also continue to maximise the funding available to residents through Government fuel poverty schemes administered through local authorities.

The current Government focus is the worst-performing off-gas grid owner occupied and privately rented homes which are eligible for upgrades through the Home Upgrade Grant Scheme (HUG).

The current round of funding (HUG2) is available until March 2025 and has two key objectives.

- To deliver progress towards the statutory fuel poverty target for England, by improving as many fuel-poor homes as reasonably practicable to a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C by 2030
- To progress the UK's target to reach Net Zero by 2050, by supporting the phase out of off-gas grid fossil fuels and the transition to low-carbon heating systems

The schemes allow fully funded energy efficiency measures such as insulation, solar panels and low carbon heating to be installed in homes with the poorest EPC ratings where residents are on a low income. The Council identifies eligible households and manages the installation of the measures through its own contractors.



## **ADVICE**

Through the LAEP membership the Council has access to the services of the fuel poverty charity Marches Energy Agency. They provide free impartial energy advice through their Warmer Derby and Derbyshire Scheme including a dedicated telephone line and home visits where appropriate.

The Housing Team offers advice on various housing options and is able to provide support for those seeking accommodation within the District. The Environmental Health Section offers advice on private sector renewal (that is: grants and enforcement in the private sector, including advice on illegal eviction and harassment) and on affordable warmth and fuel poverty issues.

The District Council is committed to working with landlords and tenants to maintain and improve housing standards in the private rented sector, including houses in multiple occupation.

## **LICENSING OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION**

Through its Public Health and Housing Team Derbyshire Dales District Council operates a licensing scheme for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), in accordance with Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004. Only those HMOs that require mandatory licensing are covered by the scheme at the present time.

The categories of HMO covered by mandatory licensing are those:

- Occupied by 5 or more persons forming more than one household;
- With shared facilities such as bathrooms, WCs or kitchens; or comprising flats provided by conversion before 1 June 1992.

This system of licensing is supported by a full inspection and enforcement service as detailed below.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

The Housing Act 2004 introduced the new statutory minimum standard for housing called the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. This system works by assigning housing defects to one or more of 29 separate hazards and by then assigning scores to the hazards based on the risks they present to the potential occupants of the house. These scores are then divided them into categories 1 and 2.

Where a hazard falls into category 1 the Council has a duty to take some form of enforcement action and where it falls into category 2 the Council may take enforcement action at its discretion. In these circumstances emergency measures cannot be used and authorities cannot make demolition orders or declare clearance areas.

The actions available to the Council are:

- Improvement Notice;
- Prohibition Order;
- Hazard Awareness Notice;
- Emergency Remedial Action\*;
- Emergency Prohibition Order\*;
- Demolition Order\*;
- Clearance Area\*
- Civil Penalties
- Banning Orders.

(\* not available where a property contains category 2 hazards only).

Derbyshire Dales District Council is committed to dealing with housing hazards within its area and intends to use the whole range of enforcement options where appropriate. In the main it is expected that enforcement action will be centred on the private rented sector. All decisions on enforcement action will be taken in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy.

Enforcement action can take many forms and Derbyshire Dales District Council is committed to a phased approach to enforcement. Wherever possible housing issues are resolved without the need to serve notices and pursue formal enforcement through the Courts and/or works in default. However, where no other option is open to the Council the appropriate notices will be served. The service of certain notices attracts a charge to cover the Council's costs in taking formal enforcement action. These costs are agreed each year through the review of the Council's Fees and Charges and are published on the District Council's website.

The issue of radon in private rented sector homes is one that is likely to affect Derbyshire Dales District Council more than the vast majority of other local authorities. The District Council is committed to ensuring its residents are protected from radon and it intends to use these enforcement powers to require landlords to assess their properties for the presence of radon and to take remedial action where levels are found to exceed the action level of 200Bq/m<sup>3</sup>.

## **COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE POLICY**

The Council welcomes any comments, complaints, queries or suggestions about this Policy. You should set out any such matters in writing to the following address:

Environmental Health Manager  
 Derbyshire Dales District Council  
 Town Hall  
 Matlock  
 Derbyshire  
 DE4 3NN  
 Email: [envhealth@derbyshiredales.gov.uk](mailto:envhealth@derbyshiredales.gov.uk)

All comments will be carefully considered and you will receive a written reply. Where appropriate the Council may contact you to discuss the views you have put forward.

## **APPEALS**

Appeals about how the Policy is operated in individual cases will be considered initially by a Review Panel consisting of the Director of Regulatory Services and the Environmental Health Manager. The purpose of the panel is to ensure consistency of decisions and to provide a forum for the consideration of the merits of each individual appeal.

Appeals must be set out in writing and must include the specific grounds on which the appeal is based. Appeals will only be considered on the following grounds:

- That the Policy has been incorrectly applied in the case in question; or
- That the case in question is exceptional in some way that justifies an exception to the general policy.

Appeals will not be considered on the grounds that the appellant disagrees with the Policy. Any such comments should be dealt with under the mechanism for comments and complaints.

A written response will be given in all cases where an appeal is heard. The reasons for the decision reached by the Review panel will be fully explained in the written response.

All appeals will be carefully reviewed to ensure that any lessons that are learned are incorporated into this Policy.

# **APPENDIX A: DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS**

## Purpose of Disabled Facilities Grants

The main purpose of disabled facilities grants is to improve the dwellings of disabled people so that it is easier for them to use their properties. This may mean enabling disabled people to be more able to care for themselves or making it easier for carers to look after a disabled person.

The Good Practice Guide specifies the types of works that fall into the scheme as follows:

- **Facilitating access and provision** – these include works to remove or overcome any obstacles that prevent a disabled person moving freely into and around the dwelling and enjoying its use. The presumption is that a disabled person should have reasonable access into his home, to its main habitable rooms and to the bathroom or shower room. Grants for stairlifts are given under this section;
- **Making a dwelling or building safe** – It is considered inappropriate to be prescriptive on the particular works that might be carried out under this section as the specification will depend on circumstances. However, they may include improving a lighting system, providing an enhanced alarm system or adapting the dwelling to minimise the risk of danger where a disabled person has behavioural problems which occasionally cause him to act in a boisterous or violent manner damaging the dwelling, himself or other people;
- **Room usable for sleeping** – the provision of a room usable for sleeping may be considered if the adaptation of an existing room or the access to that room is unsuitable;
- **Bathroom** – a disabled person should have access to a wash-hand basin, a WC and a shower or a bath (or if appropriate, a shower and a bath). This section may be used to provide these facilities and/or to facilitate their use;
- **Facilitating preparation and cooking of food** – this section allows the Council to offer disabled facilities grant to adapt kitchens to enable a disabled person to cater independently. It should be noted that where most of the cooking and preparation is done by another family member it will not normally be appropriate to carry out full adaptation of the kitchen;
- **Heating, lighting and power** – this section provides for the provision or improvement of a heating system to meet a disabled person's needs. Heating will not normally be provided in rooms that the disabled person does not use and the installation of a full central heating system should only be considered where the well-being and mobility of the disabled person would otherwise be affected. In addition this section allows for the adaptation of heating, lighting and power controls to make them suitable for use by a disabled person;
- **Dependent residents** – disabled facilities grant may be given for works to enable a disabled occupant better access and movement around the dwelling in order to care for another person who normally resides there;
- **Common parts** – disabled facilities grant may be given for works to facilitate access to a dwelling through the common parts of a building.

## **DISCRETIONARY ASSISTANCE FOR DISABLED FACILITIES AND ADAPTATIONS**

Article 3 of the Regulatory Reform Order enables local authorities to give discretionary assistance in any form for adaptations or to help the occupant to move to alternative living accommodation.

Derbyshire Dales District Council may give such assistance in the form of grants according to the financial resources available at the time of the application and at the discretion of the Environmental Health Manager. Works that may qualify for discretionary disabled facilities grants include:

- Particularly expensive works costing above the normal maximum of £30,000, where the applicant cannot fund the additional costs by any other reasonable means;
- Providing adaptations to allow disabled occupants to receive specialised care or medical treatment in their own homes;
- Adapting or providing a room to be used by a disabled person who is housebound but is able to work from home;
- Providing more satisfactory internal living arrangements for a disabled occupant where the works are of direct benefit to the disabled occupant rather than other members of the household. Such works might include extending or enlarging a dwelling that is already suitable for the disabled person in all other respects;
- Assisting a disabled person to move to a more suitable property where it is more cost effective than adapting the current home to make it suitable for the occupant's present and future needs, even though the new property may require some adaptation.

### **Eligibility**

In all cases it is necessary that the works specified in a disabled facilities grant scheme will meet the needs of the disabled person. For this reason it is essential that close liaison is maintained with the social services authority. The Good Practice Guide sets out the exact roles that both Social Services and Environmental Health should take, but in general terms Social Services will determine the needs of a disabled person and Environmental Health will determine whether it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the proposed works.

In practice this means that grant applications will normally be accompanied by a referral (Derbyshire Adaptation Partnership Referral form, or DAPR) from Derbyshire County Council's Social Services Department. Occasionally a referral may be provided by another agency, such as the Disability Resource Team and in these cases it is required that the grants officer will also liaise with Social Services.

In all cases it is essential that the wishes of the disabled person and, where applicable his or her family, are taken into account in designing the adaptation. Whilst there are necessary limits on what may be provided in terms of what will meet the disabled person's needs, and what is reasonable and practicable, wherever possible all efforts should be made to accommodate the disabled person's wishes.

Disabled facilities grants are available for owner-occupiers and tenants. The circumstances in which each of these groups of people may be eligible for grant are set out in the 1996 Act and the Good Practice Guide. This section summarises these rules but in any situation where there is doubt as to eligibility reference must be made to the two main documents.

- **Owner-occupiers** – may apply for disabled facilities grants subject to a test of financial resources. There is no prior qualification period and the property does not have to have been a dwelling for 10 years, as is the case with some discretionary renovation grants. Whilst there is no grant condition requiring repayment of the grant an ‘owner’s certificate’ must be provided;
- **Tenants** – may also apply for disabled facilities grants subject to the conditions above and the provision of a ‘tenant’s certificate’. In addition the landlord of the dwelling should provide an ‘owner’s certificate’ unless it is considered to be unreasonable to require him to do so.

## **Amount of Grant**

The amount of grant offered to applicants will depend on the result of their test of financial resources calculation but is subject to a maximum of £30,000.

Occasionally applications are received from disabled people whose conditions are degenerative and in these cases it may be anticipated that further adaptations may be required in the future. The 1996 Act provides for this situation by allowing Councils to reduce the amount of an applicant’s contributions by the amount that was contributed to a previous adaptation. This means that if the second application is made during the period of the notional loan assumed for the first application (10 years for owners and 5 years for tenants), then the amount of the second contribution should be reduced by the amount that the applicant contributed to the first adaptation. Thus if an applicant contributed £8,000 towards an adaptation and then made an application for further works towards which his contribution was £10,000 the second contribution would be reduced by the amount of the first leaving a contribution of £2,000.

## **Test of Resources**

Adult applicants for disabled facilities grants are subject to a test of financial resources. The full details are given in the Circular, but can be summarised as follows:

The relevant person for the purposes of a disabled facilities grant is:

- the disabled occupant for whom the works are to be undertaken; and
- his/her spouse or partner; or

Where the person for whom the adaptation is intended is a child or young person 18 years old or younger then no test of resources is applied to him/her or to his/her parents.

This definition of a relevant person recognises that other members of the household do not benefit from the provision of adaptations for a disabled occupant.

Experience has shown that the Test of Resources is not an exact tool and that applicants who are required to make a relatively small contribution towards the cost of an adaptation are often unable to do so, resulting in no adaptation being made. In recognition of this, from 1 April 2020 Derbyshire Dales District Council will waive Test of Resources contribution where the applicant is assessed as having to make a contribution of less than £5,000 and in those circumstances will fund the full cost of the eligible works, where ongoing Better Care Funding permits.

## Grant Conditions and Repayment

DFG will be provided for the only or main residence of an applicant. They are given subject to the following condition:

- If the grant recipient disposes of the property within 10 years of the date on which the local authority certifies that the works have been completed the local housing authority may demand repayment of that part of the grant that exceeds £5,000, subject to a maximum demand of £10,000

Repayment will only be demanded where the local housing authority is satisfied that it is reasonable to do so, having regard to:

- The extent to which the recipient would suffer financial hardship;
- Whether the disposal of the property is to enable the recipient to take up employment or to change the location of his/her employment;
- Whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or well being of the recipient or of a disabled occupant of the property; and
- Whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient to live with, or near, any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the recipient is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care which the recipient is in need by reason of disability or infirmity.

## Alternative Use of DFG Funding

Under the terms of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 it is possible to use DFG funding to support housing activities other than DFG, where those activities support the broad aims of the Better Care Fund, to enable residents to remain comfortably in their own homes rather than requiring some form of supported accommodation. It is this flexibility that has been used by Derbyshire Dales District Council to waive Test of Resources contributions below £5,000 as set out above in the section on Test of Resources. It is now proposed to utilise a proportion of the funding to support the provision of Homes Upgrade Grants as set out in Appendix B below.



# **APPENDIX B: HOMES UPGRADE GRANTS**

## **Purpose of Home Upgrade Grants**

Fuel poverty is the problem faced by households living on a low income in a home which cannot be kept warm at reasonable cost. Having a home that is adequately and safely heated, enables our residents to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer in accordance with the aims of the Better Care Fund.

The fuel poverty strategy 'Sustainable warmth: protecting vulnerable households in England' (2021) set out how the Government intends to tackle fuel poverty, while at the same time decarbonising buildings, so that those in fuel poverty are not left behind on the move to net zero, and, where possible, can be some of the earliest to benefit.

The strategy announced details of new funding of £150 million for the Home Upgrade Grant to be delivered to 2025. The Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) will provide energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating to low income households living in the worst performing, off gas grid homes in England to tackle fuel poverty and make progress towards net zero 2050.

## **Eligibility**

One of the scheme's key eligibility parameters is that funding must be targeted at low-income households likely to be in fuel poverty.

In summary the eligibility criteria are:

- Domestic dwellings;
- Off-gas grid dwellings (electricity, oil, coal, LPG, or solid fuels used for heating purposes rather than mains gas);
- Dwellings with an EPC rating of band D, E, F or G (this is a SAP score of 68 or below);
- Owner occupier and private rented sector (PRS) dwellings. PRS dwellings are only eligible with the following restrictions:
  - Landlords with a portfolio of four properties or fewer;
  - Landlords will have to declare that they have not received subsidy over the Minimal Financial Assistance limit of £315k
- Dwellings the most economically deprived neighbourhoods (income deciles 1- 3) providing the home is off-gas grid and rated EPC Band D or below or;
- Households receiving a means-tested benefit and/or with a combined annual income of below £31,000 (before tax).

The Council has a defined process for assessing eligibility that has been reviewed and approved by the Government department providing funding.

Residents may be directly targeted by the Council through use of a combination of available data sets (e.g. EPC register, Council Tax Reduction data), referred by other Council departments or partner organisations or they may self-refer.

## **Amount of Grant**

The amount of HUG offered to applicants is subject to cost caps and varies depending on the assessment carried out of their property and the energy efficiency works required to upgrade the dwelling in accordance with the aims of the scheme - EPC F-G homes to be

upgraded to a minimum band D and EPC E-D homes to be upgraded to a minimum band C.

Low-income owner occupiers can access full grant funding and should not contribute towards the cost of upgrades. Landlords who have low-income tenants, who meet the eligibility criteria, can access grant funding. Landlords are required to make a minimum contribution of one third towards the total cost of works, in line with the scheme's cost caps. This means that the maximum subsidy a landlord can receive is equivalent to two thirds of the subsidy received by an owner occupier (in a dwelling of the same heating type and starting EPC).

The Council is provided with a small administrative and ancillary (A&A) budget to enable delivery of the HUG. This budget covers, amongst other things, the costs of submitting planning applications for works on behalf of residents, where these are required. However, where eligible residents are living in a listed building, a building in a conservation area or a building that is otherwise 'hard to treat' by the nature of archetype or location this A&A budget is not always sufficient to cover these enabling costs. This means that the fuel poor resident may be left unable to benefit from the grant funding. There are significant numbers of dwellings in the Derbyshire Dales to which this may apply.

### **Use of DFG funding**

A maximum of £5000 will be allocated to each 'hard to treat' property.

DFG funding will be used to:

- Procure the expert advice required to support the preparation of planning applications for 'hard to treat' dwellings – both in the pre application and full application stages
- Support enabling works for energy efficiency works to 'hard to treat' properties to take place