

Press release: Housing funding boost to make more homes accessible for elderly and disabled people across England

Picture courtesy of Peoplecreations.

More elderly and disabled residents will be able to make adaptations to their homes so they can live independently and safely thanks to an extra £42 million of government funding confirmed by Housing and Homelessness Minister Heather Wheeler today (24 January 2018).

The funding for local housing authorities can be used to make a range of adaptations to a disabled or elderly person's home. Some of these changes are low cost but can make a big difference to the person's quality of life such as grab rails which can be installed for as little as £30 but can prevent a serious fall. Other changes include:

- ramps and stair lifts to ensure they can access all parts of their homes safely
- widening of doors to help those who are wheelchair bound to move freely around their home
- level access showers and raised toilets so that people can continue to live independently and with dignity in their home
- accessible gardens so they can continue to enjoy the simple pleasures of their garden
- home extensions which can include the construction of downstairs bedrooms and bathrooms to ensure that disabled or elderly people do not have to risk moving between floors

Minister for Housing and Homelessness Heather Wheeler said:

The government is committed to helping older and disabled people live independently and safely and this extra funding will ensure more people are getting the help they need.

Even a small adaptation to a home can make a big difference and help ensure people can stay in their home and do not have to struggle with the stairs or in simply taking a bath or shower.

The £42 million boost in funding was announced as part of the Autumn Budget and will be additional funding for the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). The £42 million will be in addition to the £431 million the government has already pledged to the DFG for the 2017 to 2018 financial year.

The councils who have been allocated the largest share of the extra funding are:

- Birmingham (£1,007,785)
- Manchester (£675,147)
- Leeds (£649,541)
- Liverpool (£590,796)
- Cornwall (£527,533)

The DFG is a capital grant paid from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to local authorities in England to adapt older and disabled people's homes to help them to live independently and safely. Adaptations can include ramps, stair lifts and suitable heating systems.

Eligibility is subject to a means test. There is an upper limit of £30,000 per eligible applicant although children aged 17 years and under are not means tested. The average grant is around £6,500.

Picture courtesy of [Peoplecreations](#).

[News story: Crime news: update on calls to criminal applications team](#)

You should now be using 0300 200 2020 for criminal application enquiries as the old 0121 232 5500 number is closing soon.

Calls to the old enquiry line have been automatically redirected to 0300 200 2020 for some months.

We gave notice that this was happening in September 2017 and now need to give notice that the redirect will end on 22 February 2018.

If you have the old number saved you should update it to 0300 200 2020 now.

We will send out regular reminders before the redirect comes to an end.

Options when you call

You will need to choose from civil, crime or technical when calling 0300 200 2020.

Crime billing

You should continue to use 0115 852 6000 for crime billing enquiries.

Further information

0300 200 2020 – criminal applications

0115 852 6000 – crime billing

[News story: Crime news: digital claims only for Proceeds of Crime Act work](#)

Starting on 26 March 2018 Proceeds of Crime Act claims will only be accepted on the correct electronic form:

85% of bills digital

We are already processing 85% of your bills on electronic versions of Proceeds of Crime Act claim forms. This follows the launch of PA1, PL1 and PL2 in the summer of 2017.

If you are not already using electronic versions you can familiarise yourself with the process before 26 March 2018 by looking at the guidance on GOV.UK.

Downloading forms

Copies of the form should be downloaded from the GOV.UK website. Claim forms should always be downloaded from the website rather than saved to your own computer to ensure you are using the most up to date version of the claim form.

Further information

[Claims paid out of the legal aid fund](#) – guidance and links to forms

[Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on Benghazi bombing](#)

The United Kingdom strongly condemns the horrific bombings in Benghazi yesterday evening, which killed at least 34 people and injured over 40 others including women and children.

Our thoughts are with the victims, their families and the people of Benghazi

at this time.

Direct or indiscriminate attacks against civilians are prohibited under international humanitarian law and constitute war crimes. The United Kingdom will continue our efforts with our international partners to pursue action against those who are complicit in such horrific attacks.

Security in Benghazi is key to Libya's overall stability, and we urge all Libyans to reject violence. The latest attack underscores the urgent need to break the political deadlock and bring peace to Libya. It is vital for all parties to engage in good faith with UN-led political process.

Press release: UK aid supports world's first mobile app to help the poorest people with disabilities into work

Landmine amputee Khtoeb Veb is a farmer in Cambodia. His prosthetic leg is waterproofed for his work in the rice fields and adapted to allow him to balance. Picture: Humanity and Inclusion UK

UK aid is behind the world's first mobile phone app to identify innovative ways to help people with disabilities in the world's poorest countries to get jobs and contribute to their society.

Speaking at a Humanity and Inclusion event, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt will set out how data, technology and collaboration are vital to making sure people with disabilities are consistently included in, and benefit from, the opportunities that are available to everyone in society.

The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and Humanity and Inclusion are collaborating to prototype a mobile phone app that will help employers in developing countries share information on how to adapt tools, including cutting-edge prosthetics, and working environments, to make sure that workplaces are accessible for employees and entrepreneurs with disabilities.

For example, in Cambodia, farmers are using low-cost prosthetic legs made for unstable terrain, such as swampy fields. The app will share this adaptation with other farmers with similar disabilities in developing countries so they can adapt their own prosthetics and continue to work.

In her speech Ms Mordaunt will also announce that the UK government's first Global Disability Summit will be held at the Olympic Park in London on 24

July 2018. The Summit will be co-hosted with the Government of Kenya, building on the existing strong ties through the Commonwealth. Inclusion is also a key theme of this year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

People with disabilities suffer appalling and entrenched stigma and discrimination, and in many parts of the world they simply don't count.

This cannot continue – which is why I have put disability at the heart of UK aid to make those invisible visible.

DFID is using new technology and building on innovative collaborations like our work with Humanity and Inclusion to help people with disabilities in the world's poorest countries get jobs and contribute to their society and economy. Alongside this, we have issued a call for the world to step up and tackle this inequality.

We must all work together to create a healthier, more inclusive and prosperous world – this is in all our interests.

For too long many people with disabilities in the world's poorest countries have not been able to fulfil their potential due to stigma or a lack of practical support.

Ms Mordaunt met the World Bank earlier this month to call on them to scale up their work on disability and development, and pushed for data collection to make the invisible visible. The Bank is expected to announce high level commitments on disability at the Global Disability Summit in London this year.

The Summit will bring the private sector, technology companies, international governments and charities together to secure ambitious commitments which will deliver a significant and tangible difference to the lives of millions of people with disabilities around the world.

The Summit will be held at the Olympic Park in London, home to the Global Disability Innovation Hub which finds innovative ways to unlock the potential of people with disabilities, to grow global prosperity.

UK aid has already been supporting innovative technology to transform the lives of people with disabilities by collaborating with tech pioneer, D-Rev, which is supported by DFID's Amplify Programme. This project is developing low-cost, high performance prosthetic knee joints for amputees in developing countries.