

# **Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy**

**Approved by Cabinet: 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020**

**(Revision 4)**



# 1. Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

## 1.1 Introduction

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 enables Councils to provide a range of housing assistance. This policy sets out the discretionary and mandatory financial assistance Dorset Council offers to eligible residents to improve or adapt their property in the Dorset Council area.

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Revision 4.

Inclusion of Energy Improvement Grant 1.4.23

Loans - Multiple loan applications 12.1.23

DFG Eligibility Criteria and maximum grant amended 10.10.22

Home Loans amended 23.12.20

Addition to criteria to facilitate fostering. 23.12.20

## **2. Summary of Assistance**

### **2.1 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)**

This is a means tested grant to adapt homes to help disabled people remain independent. This grant is delivered in partnership through the Dorset Accessible Homes Service.

### **2.2 Disabled Facilities Loans**

A low interest loan offered as an option or alternative to a DFG. It can top up to a DFG, finance an applicant's contribution to a DFG or as an alternative to a DFG. Extra top up funding may also be available (subject to available resources) through the Major Adaptations Panel provided by Adult and Community Services.

### **2.3 Handy Person Service**

A handyperson service for older and disabled people helping them maintain independent living.

### **2.4 Home Loan**

A loan up to £25,000 to improve a property to meet the Decent Homes Standard, remove a serious hazard, address fuel poverty or facilitate fostering. A Decent Home is one that has reasonably modern kitchen and bathroom facilities, is in a reasonable state of repair and has adequate thermal insulation and heating facilities.

### **2.5 Empty Property Loan**

A loan up to £25,000 to bring an empty property back into use. Available to both landlords and owners but is subject to there being a public benefit.

### **2.6 Park Home Loans**

A loan up to £10,000 to address defects to park homes. Works include insulation, heating, structural improvements and repairs.

### **2.7 Healthy Homes Scheme and Energy Advice**

The Healthy Homes Scheme improves the homes of those people at risk of poor health. The scheme improves the heating systems and insulation of homes where people suffer from a range of health conditions.

### **2.8 Energy Efficiency Grants (ECO & ECO Flex)**

ECO grants help households cut their energy bills and reduce carbon emissions. Dorset Council has published an ECO Flex statement allowing more people to access grants for insulation and heating. Dorset ECO Flex Statement: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/housing/financial-help/heating-and-insulation-grants.aspx> .

### **2.9 Energy Efficiency Loans**

This is a new loan product of up to £15,000 for energy efficiency measures in response to and in support of the work the Council is doing to tackle the climate emergency. Measures include; solar panels, thermal heating systems, heat pumps, biomass heating and solid wall insulation.

## **2.10 Energy Improvement Grant**

The Energy Improvement Grant is designed to enable homeowners and tenants\* with a disability to quickly access financial assistance to conduct a wide range of Energy improvements around the home. Funding is made available by Dorset Council in response to the cost-of-living crisis.

## **3. Amendments and Suspension to the Policy**

Cabinet agreed on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020, that authority is delegated to the Corporate Director Housing and Community Safety in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Housing to:

- a. Make minor amendments to the policy to comply with legislation and guidance.
- b. Suspend the approval of any discretionary housing assistance offered in this policy.
- c. Introduce new assistance to help private residential property should funding become available.

## 4. Financial Assistance at a glance

Assistance	
<p><b>Adaptations to help people remain independent at home</b></p>	<p><b>Disabled Facilities Grant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to £45,000 to help disabled people remain independent in their own homes.</li> <li>• Subject to a test of resources.</li> <li>• Call 0333 00 300 10</li> </ul> <p><b>Disabled Facilities Loan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to £25,000 to assist applicants for DFGs where the maximum grant is insufficient to meet the cost of the works.</li> <li>• Subject to affordability (determined by LCIC*)</li> <li>• Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@wrcic.org.uk">enquiries@wrcic.org.uk</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Handy Person</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For older and disabled people with the aim of helping them maintain independent living.</li> <li>• Only pay the cost of any materials used, means tested.</li> <li>• Call 0333 00 300 10</li> </ul>
<p><b>Decent Homes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Home Loan</b></li> <li>• Up to £25,000 to bring a property up to the Decent Homes Standard, remove category 1 hazards or facilitate fostering.</li> <li>• Call 01823 461099</li> <li>• Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@wrcic.org.uk">enquiries@wrcic.org.uk</a></li> <li>• Subject to affordability (determined by LCIC)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Empty Properties</b></p>	<p><b>Empty Property Loan</b></p> <p>Up to £25,000 Subject to public benefit test (e.g. Property sold, rented or occupied, provides affordable housing).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call 01823 461099</li> <li>• Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@wrcic.org.uk">enquiries@wrcic.org.uk</a></li> <li>• Subject to affordability (determined by LCIC)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Park Homes</b></p>	<p><b>Park Home Loan</b></p> <p>Up to £10,000 to rectify defects to an existing park home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call 01823 461099</li> <li>• Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@wrcic.org.uk">enquiries@wrcic.org.uk</a></li> <li>• Subject to affordability (determined by LCIC)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Healthy Homes</b></p>	<p><b>Healthy Homes Dorset</b></p> <p>Assistance to improve the homes of those identified as at risk of poor health from inadequate living environments.</p> <p>Free loft and cavity wall insulation, boiler repairs/replacements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call 0300 003 7023</li> <li>• <a href="mailto:help@healthyhomesdorset.org.uk">help@healthyhomesdorset.org.uk</a></li> </ul>

<p><b>Energy Efficiency</b></p>	<p><b>ECO and ECO Flex grants</b>  Eco flex applications are usually processed by installers  For more information contact Healthy Homes Dorset:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call: 0300 003 7023</li> <li>• <a href="mailto:help@healthyhomesdorset.org.uk">help@healthyhomesdorset.org.uk</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Energy Efficiency Loans:</b>  Up to a maximum of £15,000 for a variety of works; Solar panels, thermal systems, air and ground source heat pumps, biomass, and solid wall insulation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call 01823 461099</li> <li>• Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@wrcic.org.uk">enquiries@wrcic.org.uk</a></li> <li>• Subject to affordability (determined by LCIC)</li> </ul> <p><b>Energy Improvement Grant</b>  Up to a maximum of £10,000 for a variety of energy related improvements. Eligibility criteria apply, applicants must have a disability – see conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant administered by the Dorset Accessible Service</li> <li>• Requires referral from health care professional.</li> <li>• Call 0333 00 300 10</li> </ul>
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\* LCIC – Lendology Community Interest Company

## 5. Making an Application and Eligibility

	Home Owner	Tenant	Park Home	Landlord	Max £	Means Test	Contact
Disabled Facilities Grant	✓	✓	✓	X	£45,000	✓	Dorset Accessible Homes Service Tel 0333 00 300 10
Disabled Facilities Loan	✓	✓	✓	X	£25,000	✓ <sup>1</sup>	Dorset Accessible Homes Service Tel 0333 00 300 10
Handy Van	✓	✓	✓	X	Cost of materials	✓	Dorset Accessible Homes Service Tel 0333 00 300 10
Home Loan	✓	X	X	✓	£25,000	✓ <sup>1</sup>	LCIC Call 01823 461099 Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@wrcic.org.uk">enquiries@wrcic.org.uk</a>
Empty Property Loan	✓	X	X	✓	£25,000	✓ <sup>1</sup>	LCIC Call 01823 461099 Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@wrcic.org.uk">enquiries@wrcic.org.uk</a>
Park Home Loan	X	X	✓	X	£10,000	✓ <sup>1</sup>	LCIC Call 01823 461099 Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@wrcic.org.uk">enquiries@wrcic.org.uk</a>
Energy Efficiency Healthy Homes Dorset	✓	✓	✓	✓	Varies	X	Healthy Homes Dorset Tel:0300 003 7023 <a href="mailto:help@healthyhomesdorset.org.uk">help@healthyhomesdorset.org.uk</a>
Energy Efficiency Loans	✓	X	X	✓	Up to £15,000	✓ <sup>1</sup>	LCIC Call 01823 461099 Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@wrcic.org.uk">enquiries@wrcic.org.uk</a>
Energy Efficiency Grant	✓	✓ <sup>2</sup>	✓	✓	Up to £10,000	X	Dorset Accessible Homes Service Tel 0333 00 300 10

<sup>1</sup>Subject to affordability (determined by LCIC)

<sup>2</sup>Excludes property owned by Registered Providers

## 6. Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

6.1 This is a mandatory grant for works and adaptations to homes to improve access and allow disabled people to remain independent in their own home in Dorset. All DFGs are delivered through the **Dorset Accessible Homes Service**. An additional £15,000 above the statutory maximum is offered (subject to funds being available, up to a maximum grant of £45,000).

### 6.2 *Grant Conditions*

This is a summary from the legislation relating to the conditions applying to DFGs under the [Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996](#). For more detailed information refer to the Act and to any relevant regulations made under the Act.

### 6.3 *Carrying out and Completion of works*

6.3.1 The Council require as a condition of the grant that the eligible works are carried out in accordance with the specification that accompanied the Disabled Facilities Grant Approval.

6.3.2 It is a condition of the grant that the grant eligible works are carried out within twelve months from the date of approval of the application. This period may, however, be extended if the Council thinks fit, particularly where they are satisfied that the eligible works cannot be, or could not have been, carried out without carrying out other works which could not have been reasonably foreseen when the application was made.

6.3.3 The payment of a grant, or part of a grant is conditional on the eligible works being carried out to the satisfaction of the Council and the Council being provided with an acceptable invoice, demand or receipt for the repayment for the works and any preliminary or ancillary services or charges. An invoice, demand or receipt will not be acceptable if it is given by the applicant or a member of the applicant's family.

6.3.4 Unless the Council direct otherwise the eligible works must be carried out by the contractor whose estimate accompanied the application, or where two or more estimates were submitted, by one of those contractors.

6.3.5 In addition to eligible works as part of a disabled facilities grant, the following may also be considered as grant eligible works.

Works up to a value of £10,000 for the following:

- Loft and cavity wall insulation.
- Solid wall insulation
- Boiler replacement or repair.
- Night storage heater replacement or upgrade to more efficient model.
- First time gas central heating installation,
- The provision of a sustainable form of heating such as air or ground source heating or similar
- Any improvement or ancillary works associated with the installation of the above works.

The following conditions apply to works under 6.3.5



- The maximum total DFG (including all eligible works for an adaptation, those listed above and including any fees) shall not exceed the maximum permitted DFG available at that time.
- Works are not eligible under this clause unless they are made as part of an application, duly made, for a disabled facilities adaptation.
- The Council will review these additional eligibility criteria on 1st April 2023.
- It reserves the right to withdraw the additional eligible criteria immediately and at any time, prior to the formal approval of a disabled facilities grant.
- The type of installation provided shall be considered suitable for the disabled persons disability and where necessary an Occupational Therapist shall be consulted.

#### 6.4 *Repayment of grant*

6.4.1 In circumstances where the grant applicant has a qualifying owner's interest in the premises on which the relevant works are to be carried out, the grant is for a sum exceeding £5,000 and the grant recipient disposes (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) of the premises in respect of which the grant was given within 10 years of the certified date, the authority may recover the value of the grant aided works that exceed £5,000, but will not demand an amount in excess of £10,000.

6.4.2 In determining whether it is reasonable in all circumstances to require repayment the authority will consider:

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

#### 6.5 *Additional Conditions.*

##### 6.5.1 Insurance for grant-aided property

Where the applicant has an insurable interest in the grant-aided property, he shall arrange and maintain in effect adequate insurance for the property, subject to and with the benefit of the completed works, throughout the grant condition period.

##### 6.5.2 Repair of grant-aided property.

Where the applicant has a duty or power to carry out works of repair to the grant-aided property, he shall ensure that, to the extent that his duty or power allows, the property remains fit for human habitation throughout the grant condition period.

##### 6.5.3 Recovery of specialised equipment for the disabled.

Where an application for disabled facilities grant has been approved and the eligible works consist of or include the installation in the property of

specialized equipment for the disabled occupant(s), the applicant shall notify the authority if and as soon as the equipment is no longer needed.

For the purposes of this condition:-

- a) The authority shall, on approving the application, specify in writing the equipment to which this condition is to apply and the period (being a reasonable condition period for the equipment in question) during which it is to apply, and shall serve on the applicant a copy of such written specification; and;
  - b) The authority, or the social services authority on their behalf, shall be entitled, upon reasonable prior written notice given to the applicant either following the giving of the notification under sub-paragraph (a) or at any time during the condition period specified under paragraph (a), to inspect the equipment and, subject to complying with sub-paragraph (6.5.3), to remove it.
  - c) The authority agrees within a reasonable time following an inspection of the equipment, to notify the applicant in writing whether the equipment is to be removed; and;
  - d) if the equipment is to be removed, to remove it or arrange for it to be removed and forthwith to make good any damage caused to the property by its removal.
- 6.5.4 The authority further agrees, where the applicant has contributed to the cost of carrying out the eligible works, to pay to him, within a reasonable time of the removal of the equipment, the reasonable current value of that proportion of its original cost, which represents the proportion of his contribution to the cost of carrying out the eligible works.
- 6.5.5 For the purposes of sub-paragraph (6.5.4), the reasonable current value of the equipment shall be its value at the time of removal from the property.
- 6.5.6 Subject to the authority giving prior written notice in accordance with sub-paragraph (6.5.3(b)) the applicant agrees to afford, or to use his best endeavours to arrange for the affording of, reasonable access to the property to the authority for the purposes of inspection and removal of the equipment.

#### 6.6 *Repayment of grant*

In the event of a breach of any of the additional conditions, the authority may demand repayment from the applicant of a sum equal to the amount of the grant paid or, as the case may be, any instalments of grant paid and the same shall become repayable to the authority in accordance with section 52 of the [Act](#).

#### 6.7 *Repayment in cases of other compensation*

Where the authority has approved an application for grant assistance and where the applicant receives payment on an insurance or damages claim in respect of the grant aided works, then they should repay to the authority the grant, so far as is appropriate out of the proceeds of any claim. The authority therefore requires that the applicant shall take reasonable steps to pursue any relevant claim to which this section applies, to notify the Council of that fact, and to repay the grant, so far as appropriate, out of the proceeds of such a claim.

The claims to which this applies are:

- a) An insurance claim, or a legal claim against another person, in respect of damage to the premises to which the grant relates, or;
- b) A legal claim for damages in which the cost of the works to premises to which the grant relates is part of the claim;
- c) And a claim is a relevant claim to the extent that works to make good the damage mentioned in paragraph (a), or the cost of which is claimed as mentioned in paragraph (b), Are works to which the grant relates.

6.7.1 In the event of a breach of this condition, the applicant shall on demand pay to the local housing authority the amount of the grant so far as relating to any such works, together with compound interest as from such date as may be prescribed by or determined in accordance with the regulations, calculated at such reasonable rate as the authority may determine and with yearly rests.

6.7.2 The authority may determine not to make such a demand or to demand a lesser amount.

**Note:**

1. Grant conditions cannot be imposed on tenants, but may be imposed on the landlord if they are was required to provide a certificate of intended letting before the application from the tenant was entertained.
2. Grant applications related to movable structures used as accommodation such as caravans or boats will be considered eligible on a case by case basis.

## **7. Disabled Facilities Loan**

To help applicants where the largest grant of £45,000 is not enough to meet the cost of the works and no other form of public help is available. This loan is available up to £25,000, and is administered by Lendology CIC, conditions apply see Section 16.

## **8. Handy Person Service**

8.1 The handyperson service can provide a range of works for older and disabled people so they can maintain independent living. The range of jobs include:

- Small building repairs
- Minor adaptations
- Odd jobs such as putting up curtains, shelves, replacing light bulbs.
- General home safety checks and remedial actions
- Falls and accident prevention checks and remedial actions such as repairing floor coverings
- Security checks – installing locks, chains and spyholes

This list is not exhaustive, generally work should small repairs that can be completed quickly.

### **8.2 Who is eligible for the handy van service?**

Home owners and tenants over the age of 50 or disabled people of any age. This service is available throughout Dorset subject to demand.

### 8.3 How much does the service cost?

All eligible applicants need to pay for the cost of any materials used.

Applicants in receipt of at least one of the following benefits will only pay for parts, labour costs are free.

Pension Credit (both Savings and Guarantee), Income Support, Income based Job Seekers Allowance, Income based Employment and Support Allowance, Council Tax Support (formerly known as Council Tax Benefit), Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit with a maximum income of £15,050 per annum as assessed by HMRC for that award, Child Tax Credit with a maximum income of £15,050 per annum as assessed by HMRC for that award and Universal Credit.

Applicants not in receipt of a means tested benefit will pay £20 per hour or part thereof. Most jobs are finished within 2 hours.

## 9. Home Loan

9.1 To improve properties to meet the Decent Homes Standard

Up to £25,000 to remove a Category 1 hazard, to address fuel poverty or to bring a house up to the Decent Homes Standard. A Decent Home is one that has reasonably modern kitchen and bathroom facilities, is in a reasonable state of repair and has adequate thermal insulation and heating facilities.

9.2 Fostering: Applications for loans will be considered where the works facilitate the fostering of children and could include works to improve or expand kitchen or bathroom facilities or provide additional sleeping accommodation.

All loans are administered by Lendology CIC, affordability and other conditions apply see Section 16.

## 10. Empty Property Loan

10.1 Up to £25,000 per unit to bring an empty property back into use. The availability of loans to landlords is subject to there being a public benefit which may be:

- Bringing an empty property back into use which has been empty for at least 6 months and would otherwise remain empty.
- Help the Council to meet housing need by setting below Local Housing Allowance rates
- Providing nomination rights to the Council for an agreed period likely to be 5 years.

10.2 The ability of the landlord to secure a commercial loan will be a factor in considering eligibility for a loan from the Council. Loans provided may permit either renting or sale. Properties made available to rent must be let at a rent, at or below Local Housing Allowance levels, and remain available for an agreed period likely to be equal to the period of the loan. The landlord must become a member of the Council's Landlords' Partnership. Loans provided to enable renovation before sale will be repayable on sale or after two years whichever is the sooner. Loans provided to enable renovation before sale will be repayable on sale of the property or when the loan term has expired whichever is sooner.

Loans are administered by Lendology CIC, conditions apply see section 16.

## 11. Park Home Loan

11.1 A loan up to £10,000 payable across a maximum of 60 months to address defects to park homes. Applicants will need to provide written confirmation of security of tenure on their park home site. This might include a pitch agreement or a lease document.

Works can include;

- Improving insulation.
- Replacing external cladding.
- Repairs to the structure of a park home.
- Installation of gas central heating or other similar heating Improvement.

Loans are administered by Lendology CIC, conditions apply see Section 16.

## 12. Healthy Homes Dorset

12.1 The aim of this scheme is to improve the homes of those identified as at risk of poor health from cold homes. The outcomes are to improve the health and wellbeing of the recipients, and reduce demand for health and social care services.

### 12.2 Who is eligible?

The scheme aims to improve insulation and heating systems to improve the homes of those identified as at risk of poor health from cold homes. Vulnerable people include;

pre-existing chronic respiratory conditions	living with addiction
risk of coronary heart disease or stroke	attended hospital due to a fall
a recent immigrant and asylum seeker	asthma
mental health condition	low income
disability	pregnant
aged 65 or over	child under 5

### 12.3 How much does the service cost?

Everyone is eligible for free energy advice. The scheme grant funds the following works to eligible applicants at no cost to the applicant:

- Cavity wall Insulation
- Loft insulation
- Heating improvements

The assistance may also include any work to prepare the home for insulation e.g. repairing cracked walls or render, or cutting a larger loft hatch.

#### **12.4 Are there any conditions?**

Subject to meeting the eligibility criteria all works provided by the scheme are free.

**Note:** Healthy Homes Dorset is a partnership between Dorset Council, BCP Council and Public Health Dorset. It is delivered by Centre for Sustainable Energy and Evolve Home Energy Solutions.

### **13. Energy Efficiency Grants (ECO & ECO Flex)**

13.1 Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a government energy efficiency scheme helping reduce carbon emissions and tackling fuel poverty. Healthy Homes Dorset provides help and advice for residents in Dorset to access this funding. Measures to improve the energy efficiency of homes include.

- Cavity wall insulation
- Loft insulation
- Solid wall insulation
- Heating system installations.

ECO-Flex Statement broadens the national eligibility criteria allowing more residents to access funding in Dorset.

#### **13.2 Who is eligible?**

This is a national scheme and eligibility may change over time. Those on low income or on means tested benefits are however highly likely to be eligible for funding. Contact Healthy Homes Dorset to check eligibility.

### **14. Energy Efficiency Loans.**

14.1 Energy efficiency loans: up to a maximum of £15,000 can be obtained to provide the following works in domestic property:

- Solar Panels
- Solar Thermal Systems
- Air Source Heat Pumps
- Ground Source Heat Pumps
- Biomass Heating Systems
- Solid Wall Insulation

14.2 All works are subject to a survey by a competent person, no early repayment charges are applied and there are variable repayment periods available. Loans are administered by Lendology CIC conditions apply see section 16.

## **15. Loans administered by Lendology CIC.**

15.1 In response to government guidance promoting the use of loans to encourage private sector renewal Dorset Council is a member of a consortium of Councils in the SW that funds Lendology Community Interest Company (Lendology CIC). Lendology CIC provides a range of affordable loans on behalf of these Councils.

15.2 The conditions below relate to all loans administered by Lendology CIC

### **Who is eligible?**

- Applicants must be over 18 years of age and have held a freehold / leasehold interest in the property concerned for a minimum period of one year prior to the application for loan assistance.
- Owners of park homes will need to provide proof of ownership of the unit and a responsibility to undertake the necessary works.
- Property owners who, following a financial assessment are considered to be in need of a loan. Where individuals are able to pay themselves then they will be expected to do so. Likewise, the Council are obliged to protect their investments and will not agree to lend money to anyone who does not pass the financial eligibility assessment or where the risk is considered too great.

### **15.3 Are there any conditions?**

The following conditions apply:

- Loans are available solely at the discretion of the Council. The current maximum loan available is £25,000 (£10,000 for park homes).
- Loans will only be available subject to the Council confirming eligibility and detailing the works.
- All loans are registered at the Land Registry. Sale of the property during the loan term will require repayment of the loan to Lendology CIC.
- Loans to the owners of park homes cannot be secured by registration and therefore approval will be dependent on production of a valid lease or pitch agreement showing security of tenure of the park home on the site.
- Loans may include the reasonable cost of ancillary fees and charges, e.g., Building Regulation approval, within the maximum loan amount.
- Should the property be in joint ownership, the financial standing of the joint owners and their ability to fund the necessary works either independently or with a commercial loan will be considered. If a Council-funded loan is considered appropriate, the written consent of any joint owners must be provided prior to any loan being approved.
- It is not intended that the loans scheme available should be used as a cheap alternative to a commercial loan, and evidence of non-availability of finance

from a commercial provider may be required before a referral can be made to Lendology CIC.

- Any works undertaken to the property not specified by the Councils will be the responsibility of the property owner and not eligible for loan assistance.

15.4 Loan products are constantly being reviewed, but Lendology CIC have a variety of loan products to meet individual need. The core products include:

- Capital and interest repayment loan
- Interest only loan
- Interest roll-up Deferred repayment loan
- Deferred Capital repayment loan
- Fixed term interest only converting to capital repayment
- Fixed fee (only where client unable to afford any other options)

15.5 Lendology CIC's financial assessment will determine the most appropriate loan product to meet individual need. In some circumstances, applicants may require a combination of loan products and a variation of interest rate to ensure responsible and affordable lending.

15.6 The Council will respond to any enquiry for assistance by conducting a survey of the property to identify eligible works, and will discuss eligibility for a subsidised loan.

15.7 The Council will confirm the works eligible for assistance and forward a referral to Lendology CIC, who operate as the Council's loan administrator. Eligible works on Home Loans will be restricted to those necessary to meet the Decent Homes Standard only. In order to simplify the process for applicants Lendology CIC may conduct financial assessments ahead of any survey by the Council should the initial enquiry be made to Lendology CIC. In such situations it will still be necessary for the Council to determine the eligible works and approve the application.

15.8 Lendology CIC will determine if a loan can be provided and agree the terms of any such loan with the applicant before requesting the Council's consent to the approval of the loan application. It is the function of Lendology CIC to determine which loan product, if any, is available to an applicant following a financial assessment. Their decision on an applicant's ability to service a loan is final. Lendology CIC will determine if a loan can be provided and agree the terms of any such loan with the applicant before requesting the Council's consent to the approval of the loan application. Referral can only be made by the Council and any loan offered can only cover the cost of works deemed eligible by the Council.

15.9 Applications for loans are made direct to Lendology CIC. An application will need to be accompanied by two competitive estimates suitably itemised. Loans are subject to a limit of £25,000 (£10,000 for park homes) and once approved, are registered by Lendology CIC at the Land Registry as a title restriction. Approval of



loans in excess of £25,000 may be considered as an exception to this policy but will be subject to support from the loan administrator and will require the approval of the Corporate Director Housing in consultation with the portfolio holder Housing.

15.10 On confirmation from Lendology CIC that a loan application may be approved, the Council will review the loan offer, and the details of the application. The Council will make the final decision on the loan application and notify Lendology CIC accordingly.

15.11 The loan agreement is between the property owner and Lendology CIC. It is the responsibility of the applicant to undertake the works for which the loan is provided, make the agreed repayments to Lendology CIC and to confirm completion of the works to the Council.

15.12 The interest rate charged by the loan provider will be fixed for the duration of the loan and will be between 0% – 4%.

15.13 Lendology CIC have total discretion on assessing an applicant's ability to finance a loan. There is no right of appeal against their decision.

15.14 Multiple loan applications

The maximum number of loan applications that Dorset Council will consider by any one applicant (either a person, company, charity or trust) or related to one particular property is three. The reason for the policy decision is to manage the risk of default from multiple loan to the same person..

**Note:** The capital for these loans is provided by the Council but administered by Lendology CIC.

## **16. Energy Improvement Grant**

16.1 The Energy Improvement Grant is designed to enable homeowners and tenants\* with a disability to quickly access financial assistance to conduct a wide range of Energy improvements around the home. Funding is made available by Dorset Council in response to the cost-of-living crisis.

This is to achieve and promote independent living, assist people coping with the cost of living crisis and assist with meeting of local authority energy efficiency commitments.

This is a discretionary grant and therefore such assistance only remains available while funds permit. Funding maybe withdrawn with immediate effect for grants yet to be approved.

## 16.2 Eligibility Criteria

A person is eligible to apply for an Energy Improvement Grant if they:

- Own their own home as a freeholder or leaseholder\* (\*with at least 5 years left to run)
- Are a tenant\*\* or life tenant or have a license to occupy a park home on a licensed site.
- Are a private tenant living in a property owned by an individual under a formal tenancy agreement that is not a housing association.
- And live in the local authority area of Dorset Council.
- Have a disability, (Disability” has the meaning given by section 6 of the Equality Act 2010).
- Have a physical or mental impairment which is not a disability, but which gives rise, or which the authority considers may in the future give rise, to needs for care and support, or comes within any other category of persons the authority considers appropriate to include in a register of persons who have, or the authority considers may in the future have, needs for care and support.
- The applicant must have energy improvement requirements that are eligible under the criteria listed and deemed necessary by the inspecting officer.
- The applicant does not have to be on a means tested benefit nor will be subject of a means test for ascertaining a level of financial contribution to the energy improvements offered.

## 16.3 Grant exemptions

The grant assistance will not be provided for tenanted properties where the eligible works are the normal, legal responsibility of the landlord or where a landlord is subject to enforcement proceedings by the Council. (For example, an Improvement Notice or other Housing Act 2004 notice has been served or is being considered by the Council against a landlord).

\*\*Tenants living in housing association properties are excluded from this grant as housing associations have an obligation to meet legislative energy guidelines.

## 16.4 What works are eligible?

At the Dorset Accessible Home Service discretion, a grant will be considered for the reasonable cost of the work necessary to:

- Carry out minor works to enable the repair of existing gas boilers and attached pipework/radiators
- The replacement of gas boilers where un-repairable or are aged and inefficient
- The replacement of night storage heaters where un-repairable or are aged and inefficient.
- First time installation of an energy efficient heating or insulation system not covered by other energy schemes or funding.
- The installation of temperature controls to: the main system or to individual heating units where possible
- Replacement of defective hot water cylinders with attached insulation cylinders, insulation of hot water carrying pipework within the property were reasonably accessible.
- Repairs to windows or external doors of gaskets, hinges, handles, broken double glazed units, panels and/or application of draught proof stripping, where these repairs will improve the energy efficiency of the window or external door.
- Fitting of back draught fan shutters externally to wall fans only fitted with open grill or open hooded vents permitting direct external air flows into the building reducing the buildings energy efficiency.
- Replacement of inefficient or decayed timber or metal windows or external doors that permit the reduction of the effectiveness of the building energy efficiency.
- The closing in of building fabric apertures where, the opening is detrimental to reasonably recognisable permittance of air that will compromise the building energy efficiency.
- The installation of insulation to as close as possible the current building regulations in loft spaces directly over the living accommodation of the building.
- Additionally, to provide financial top up assistance to projects administered by Ridgewater Energy commissioned programme for 'Healthy homes Dorset' in the Dorset Council area. Support the topping up of works funding shortfalls by Ridgewater energy in the installation of any of the above measures and to include: Photo voltaic cells, Ground source heating schemes for individual properties.

## 16.5 Amount of Assistance

- The minimum grant range starts at a minimum of £50.00; the maximum grant is £10,000 per household. The grant includes the cost of the eligible works plus the DAHS agency fee (12% +VAT) of the net cost of the works.
- The grant is limited to 1 grant per household in a calendar year.

#### 16.6 What conditions are attached to the grant?

- The application must be made on the approved referral form or other format agreed by the Council.
- Prior to works being carried out, at least one quotation from a bona fide contractor or other appropriate service provider shall be submitted for the cost of the eligible approved works.
- No works shall be carried out without formal grant approval.

## **17. Ensuring Equality and the Armed Forces Covenant**

17.1 In providing financial assistance we are committed to ensuring that no one is discriminated against on the basis of their age, disability, employment status, ethnic or national origins, race or colour, marital status, religious or political beliefs, responsibilities for children or dependents, gender or gender reassignment, sexuality, social class, or unrelated criminal convictions.

17.2 Dorset Council actively supports the Armed Forces Covenant, a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served in the armed forces and their families are treated fairly. Dorset Council reserves the right to use its discretion to ensure members of the armed forces community face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of our services.

17.3 A version of this policy can be provided in large print upon request.

