

Annexe G – Administration and Performance Standards

1. Access

1.1 Those who are able to qualify for grant assistance will be given every opportunity to access the process through full dissemination of information at Council points of contact and those of partner organisations. Information will be made available at all Social Service Centres and via all partner agencies.

1.2 The Council will make the Strategy and associated policies available to all regardless of ability, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation. This information will be made available in different formats and languages to ensure equality of information.

1.3 A summary of grant Strategy will be provided at such outlets and electronically on the Council's website. The Council will aim to provide a service where customers will be able to register an initial enquiry on line.

1.4 The Council will make the strategy available to all service users regardless of circumstance. To request a copy of this strategy please contact the Housing Renewal Team, 7 High Street, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1SS or by telephoning 01983 823058 or by emailing us at Housing@iow.gov.uk

1.5 This Strategy can be found on the council's website at http://www.iwight.com/living_here/housing/housing_strategy/Housing_Reports/Housing_Renewal_Strategy/

2. Application Process

2.1 All enquiries for assistance, however received, will be logged by the Housing Renewal Team.

2.2 An information pack will be sent to the enquirer giving information on the Policy, Financial Assistance available and any action that may happen as a result of a visit by an officer.

- 2.3 If in the event of an enquiry assistance is not available and the property is classed as unfit for human habitation then the Council shall consider the procedures set out in its Housing Enforcement Policy.
- 2.4 If the enquirer still wishes to apply for assistance they should respond on a form given by the department.
- 2.5 Officers will undertake initial fact finding exercises to ensure that the application falls within the remit of this strategy. This may be in the form of a telephone call or visit to the applicants address.
- 2.6 If the provisions of this strategy still apply then the applicant shall be invited to make a formal application for assistance. Applications for any other grant shall be on a form drawn up by the Council for that purpose.

3. Grant Conditions

- 3.1 Grant conditions will apply from when the assistance is approved. This means that should the Council decide that the grant is not completed it may recover any interim payments made or other associated administration costs.
- 3.2 All conditions will be registered as a local land charge. This charge will not be removed until either the conditions expire or the grant is repaid, together with any interest or additional administration charges that may apply.
- 3.3 A local land charge is binding on any person who is the owner of the premises concerned. When a grant condition is broken, the Council has legal powers to enforce the local land charge and secure payment of any amount due.
- 3.4 Full details of grant conditions will be published as part of an information pack to enquirers and will be available through all normal channels.

4. Supervision of Grant Work

- 4.1 It is not normal nor practical for the Council to act as an agent for the applicant or to undertake any services such as obtaining quotes, completing application forms or liaison with builders to supervise works in progress.
- 4.2 It shall be the responsibility of the applicant to complete forms, obtain quotes and deal with the contractor to supervise works. The applicant may be required to provide more than one quote when it is considered that the quote provided does not represent good value for money.
- 4.3 The Council is not a supervisor of works and will not act as such. It will, however, be responsible for ensuring that the works for which assistance is provided are completed to the satisfaction of the Council.
- 4.4 The Housing Renewal Team will not act in any way as an arbitrator between the contractor and the recipient of assistance.
- 4.5 The Council will endeavour to visit the property on completion of works.
- 4.6 The Council used to visit when a request for a stage payment was made. This gave the impression to the applicant that the contractor was employed by the Council and was duty bound to get involved in disputes between the contractor and the applicant. The Council may decide not to visit the property whilst works are under way to ensure that resources are more effectively used within the department.

The Council will make clear that in the event of any additional assistance being provided a charge may be made to the applicant.

5. Fees and Charges

- 5.1 The Council intends to make the fees and charges associated with providing assistance as low as possible, whilst maintaining best value for the customer and where possible funding additional services.
- 5.2 Full details of the Fees and Charges associated with providing assistance will be published as part of an information pack to enquirers and will be available through all normal channels.

6. Key Service Standards

6.1 Applications for Disabled Facilities Grants will be assessed in accordance with the provisions set down in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

6.2 A fact-finding visit will be undertaken by an officer within 8 weeks of receipt of formal enquiry.

6.3 All applications for other forms of assistance will follow the general conditions set down in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 that is approvals will be made within 6 months of the department receiving all of the relevant information it considers appropriate to make the determination.

6.4 Should an application be eligible for assistance but the Council does not have resources available to make a payment then the applicant will be invited to make a fresh application should finance be available.

6.5 We will ensure that this Strategy is fair by monitoring clients and including any findings in a key review of this Strategy, undertaken in partnership with service users.

6.6 We welcome and value comments on how we run the service. If someone wishes to make a comment, complaint or suggestion they will be assisted to do so.

6.7 All other service standards will be published with the detailed policy and operational procedures.

