

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 20 January 2022

Follow-up Written Answer from O&S Committee – 9 December 2021

Minute 51 - Q2 Performance report 2021/22

Question

Disabled residents – It was noted that there was a shortfall in spending in Disabled Facilities Grants and also on the Handy Person Scheme due to the pandemic. Questions were raised regarding the availability of funding for vulnerable residents for the cost of essential items such as replacement batteries and repairs for items that had been installed but were later out of manufacturers' warranty when they broke down. Officers agreed to look into this and come back to Members.

Written Response

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) do not cover the cost of repairs of items which were originally funded by them, once out of the warranty period. The main area where this can be an issue is with DFG funded stairlifts, and while a further DFG can be applied for a replacement lift at the end of its economically viable life, it would not apply to repairs, due to the grant conditions attached to this funding. It may however be possible for residents to utilise alternative funding schemes, for example owner occupiers on low incomes may be eligible to apply for a Small Works Grant or Loan to assist with the cost of repairs.

The Housing Assistance Policy, which sets out what housing assistance, including DFGs, is available, is due to be reviewed in 2022, with a view to identifying any further ways of assisting more people, with an associated outcome of increasing spend of the grant allocation (which is ring fenced from central government for this purpose). A number of ideas are subject to consideration and would be presented for Executive approval in due course. One proposal is to fund an extended e.g. 5 year, warranty for items such as stairlifts and through floor lifts, rather than the current standard one year manufacturer's warranty only. This would help to address the cost of any necessary repairs for a longer period.