



Home Repair Assistance Grant



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Introduction

Home repair assistance (HRA) is a discretionary form of assistance. It is given in the form of a grant by North Herts District Council under The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002, in compliance with our Private Sector Housing Renewal policy. A copy is available on our website and is available in summary form from the Council Offices.

HRA is specifically designed to provide practical help through a grant for small-scale works of repair, improvement or adaptation to a dwelling, houseboat or mobile home.

This document briefly describes the help available and how to go about applying for a grant.

Before applying for a grant

It is a good idea to get advice from a qualified person when considering the need to carry out any works on your property. You should also consider how best to meet the costs. Whether or not the work is grant-aided, it is important to ensure that the work gets done properly and at a reasonable price. It is also advisable to employ a reputable builder.

In looking at possible options, advice may also be sought from the Environmental Protection and Housing Team at North Herts District Council, Tel **01462 474000**.

Who can apply for Home Repair Assistance?

HRA is available to Owner /Occupiers and private tenants.

To qualify for a HRA an applicant must:

- be aged 18 or over on the date of application;
- live in the dwelling as their only or main residence or care for an elderly (aged 60 or over), disabled or infirm person;
- have an owners interest in the dwelling or be a tenant of the dwelling, alone or jointly with others; or occupy the dwelling under a right of exclusive occupation granted for life or for a period of more than five years;
- have a duty or power to carry out the works in question;
- be in receipt of an income-related benefit (i.e. Income Support, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Pension Guarantee Credit (not Pension Savings Credit), Working Tax credit and Child Tax Credit with relevant income of less than £15,050, Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, War Disablement Benefit, Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit.

What is Home Repair Assistance available for?

Applications for discretionary Home Repair Assistance will be considered for the following outcomes:

- a) To remedy essential repairs or conditions that interfere materially with the personal comfort of an elderly, infirm or disabled occupant.
- b) Remedial action to remove Category 1 hazard(s) where cost of works is less than £2,750 and property is occupied by person(s) falling within the defined vulnerable group for that hazard.
- c) Urgent adaptations for the care of the disabled, elderly or infirm will be considered from applicants, including those not in receipt of benefit, in exceptional circumstances only, subject to authorisation by the Head of Housing and Public Protection and the Portfolio Holder.
- d) Improvement to home security for the disabled, elderly or infirm.
- e) Essential and significant repairs to the basic fabric or services of residential mobile homes.

Within these general guidelines it is for the Council to decide what works, if any, they will grant aid.

Enquiries for very small items of work from older or disabled people may be considered for referral to the “Handy Person Scheme”. For further information on this scheme contact the Papworth Trust Home Solutions on 01279 755905.

How will the amount of assistance be calculated?

HRA is intended for small-scale works. The assistance is limited to £5,000 within any three-year period, subject to its own terms and conditions.

Multiple applications can be made as long as the level of assistance does not exceed £5,000 in any three-year period.

How do I apply?

Make an enquiry to the **Environmental Protection & Housing Team at North, Hertfordshire District Council, Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City, Herts SG6 3JF**. Tel. **01462 474000** or email: env.health@north-herts.gov.uk . They will arrange for an officer to visit your property to assess what works are eligible for assistance.

Following the visit to your home a schedule of works eligible for assistance, together with an application form and other documentation you will need to support your application, will be forwarded to you.

If you or your family are not in a position to make the application, which includes acquiring estimates, you may decide to use the services of an external agent to help you with making an application. The agent will act on your behalf, acquiring estimates, making the application and supervising the works. The reasonable cost of any agents fees can be considered for grant aid.

You will not normally get assistance if you start work before the Council approve the application.

An application is only valid if it is made on the form provided by the Council for the purposes and if it includes all the information required.

When applying for assistance, the Council will normally require at least one written estimate before deciding on the cost of the works eligible for grant. You need to get a quotes from reputable builders and it may be worth using one who belongs to a trade association which operates a guarantee scheme such as those run by the Building Employers Confederation or the Federation of Master Builders. The council may be able to advise you about employing one.

Grant approval

The Council should notify you of the outcome of your application no later than 6 weeks from its receipt. Once you have received approval the works must be completed within 4 months.

Grant payment

The HRA payment will only be paid when the Council are satisfied that the work has been completed to their satisfaction and in accordance with the grant approval. Note, however, that you or your agent are responsible for ensuring that your builder meets the standard **you** require.

The grant can only be paid on provision of an acceptable invoice, demand or receipt of payment for the works. **An invoice is not acceptable if it is for work or services provided by the applicant or a member of his or her family. Where the works are carried out by the applicant or a relative, only invoices for materials or services that are bought in will be acceptable.**

The Council may pay the grant in full on completion of the works or, if several different builders are involved on completion of work by each builder.

The Council will pay the grant direct to your contractor, your agent or yourself. This should not affect your right to ensure that the contractor has completed the works to your satisfaction. If the contractor has not, you should notify the Council so that they can withhold payment, if appropriate.

Getting advice

If you have any queries regarding anything in this document please contact:

Environmental Protection & Housing Team at North Herts District Council on Tel. **01462 474000** or email: env.health@north-herts.gov.uk

Other relevant information

If you or someone living in your property is disabled, **Disabled Facilities grant** are available for a range of works needed to help a disabled person to remain living more independently in their home. Further details can be found in the leaflet, **Disabled Facilities grant**.

These documents and full details of North Hertfordshire District Council's grant policy is available in electronic form on the Council's website.

www.north-herts.gov.uk

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