



Foundations

Disabled Facilities Grants: Activity Report for 2018/19

Foundations

January 2020



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About Foundations

Foundations is the National Body for Home Improvement Agencies in England and includes improving the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants. We are funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government which means almost all the support we provide is completely free of charge.

This includes:

- **FREE** DFG Champions Roadshows
- **FREE** In-house training on DFG rules and regulations
- **FREE** facilitated workshops on DFG processes and procedures
- **FREE** assessment against the DFG Quality Standard
- **FREE** advice and support

Our Mission

To share the magic about what makes good home improvement and adaptation services

Our Vision

A thriving range of home improvement agencies – supporting people to live safe, independent and happy lives in the home of their choice

Our Values

- We are different and make a difference
- We work in perpetual beta
- We challenge our own thinking
- We speak with integrity
- We trust each other
- We seek partnerships that serve our mission



Disabled Facilities Grants 2018/19

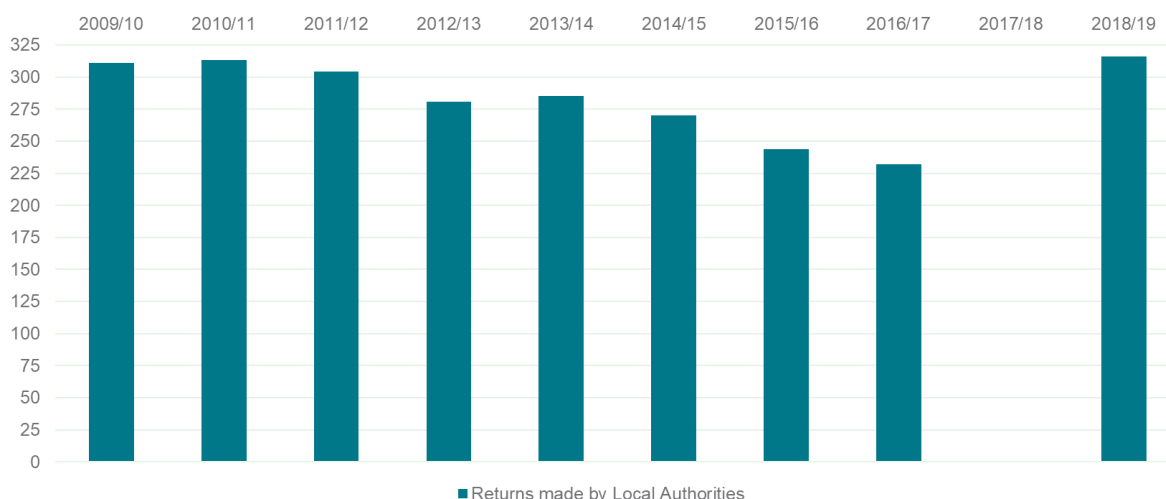
The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government asks local housing authorities to submit an annual data return detailing their Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) activity.

This report provides Foundations' headline analysis of the data returned for the 2018/19 financial year, including trend analysis from previous returns where available.

During 2018/19 local authorities in England received **58,200 grant applications** leading to **53,500 homes being adapted** (for owner occupiers and tenants of private landlords or housing associations).

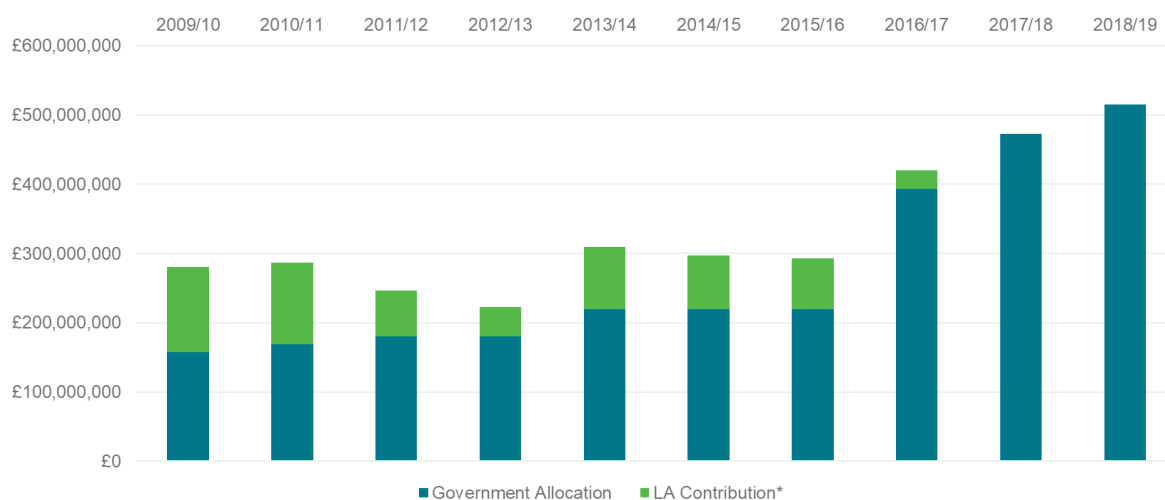
The 142 local authorities with retained Council Housing completed a further **32,900 home adaptations**. With local housing authorities adapting **a total of 86,400 homes**.

Data Returns Submitted



Since returns were made voluntary in 2010 the number of local authorities submitting returns had fallen gradually year on year. For 2018/19 a new online system was introduced (Delta) and Foundations encouraged all authorities to submit data resulting in a 99.7% return. No data was collected for 2017/18.

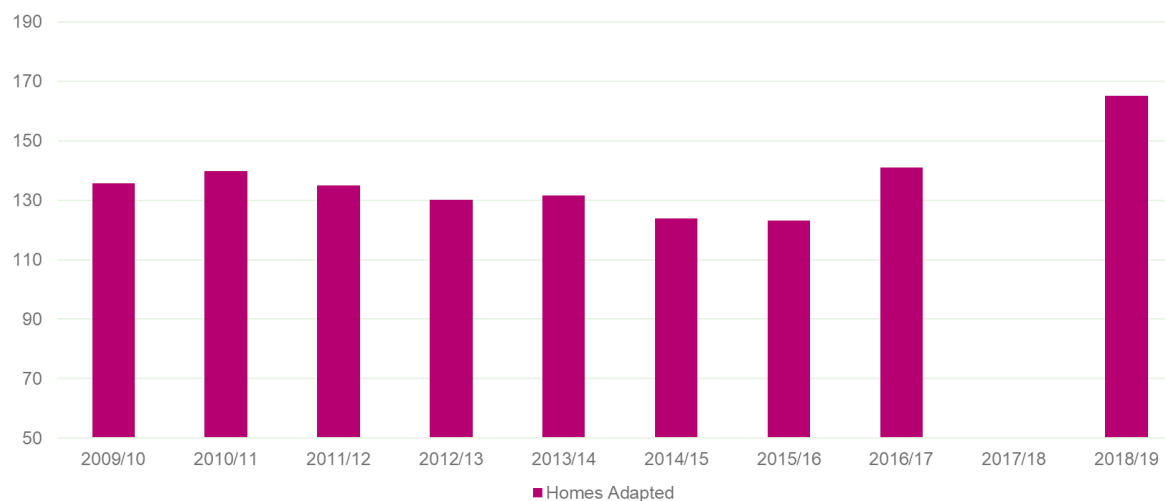
DFG Allocations



The 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review significantly increased the allocation of DFG funding to local authorities, topping £500m in 2018/19.

*No data was collected on Local Authority contributions for 2017/18 or 2018/19.

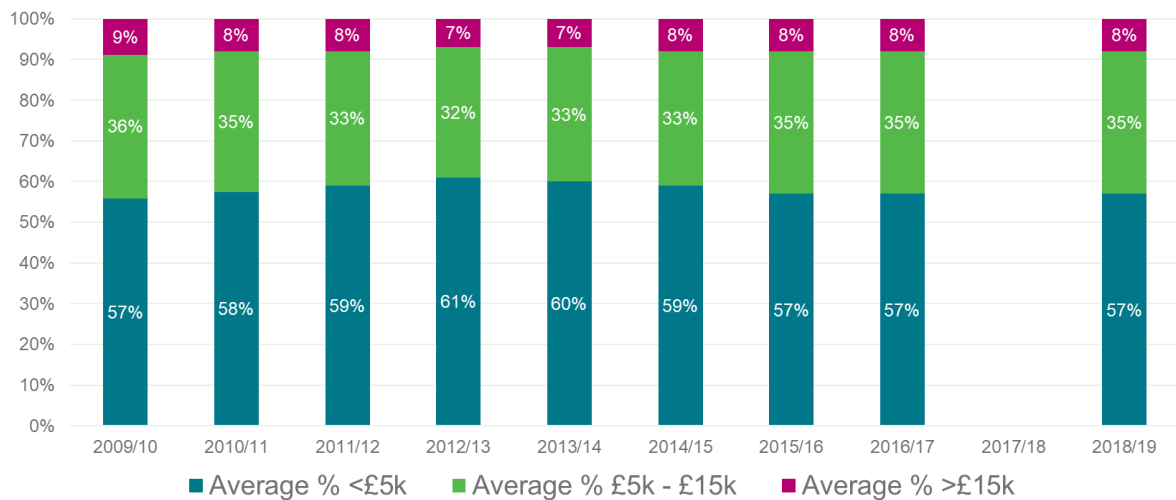
Average Number of DFGs Completed per Local Authority



The increased funding since 2015 has seen a resultant increase in activity, with local authorities now completing 35% more home adaptations.

Many areas now use their allocations more flexibly by publishing a Housing Assistance Policy under the Regulatory Reform Order (Housing Assistance) 2002. This means that they can help people who would not be assisted under a standard DFG.

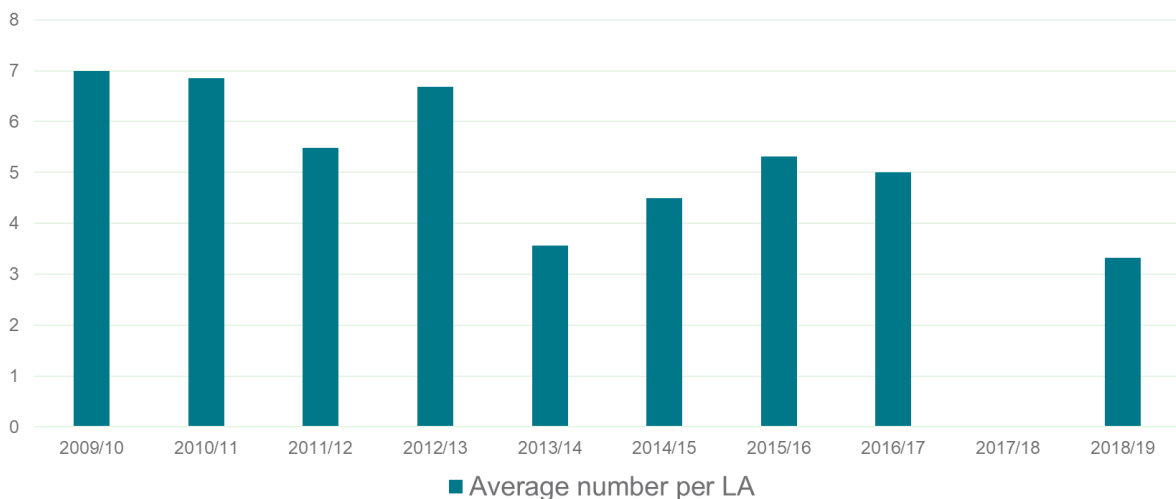
Values of DFGs Completed



Despite the increase in funding the cost of DFGs completed has stayed remarkable stable over the last decade. 57% of grants awarded are still less than £5,000, with only 8% at more than £15,000.

The most common adaptations are level access showers and stairlifts.

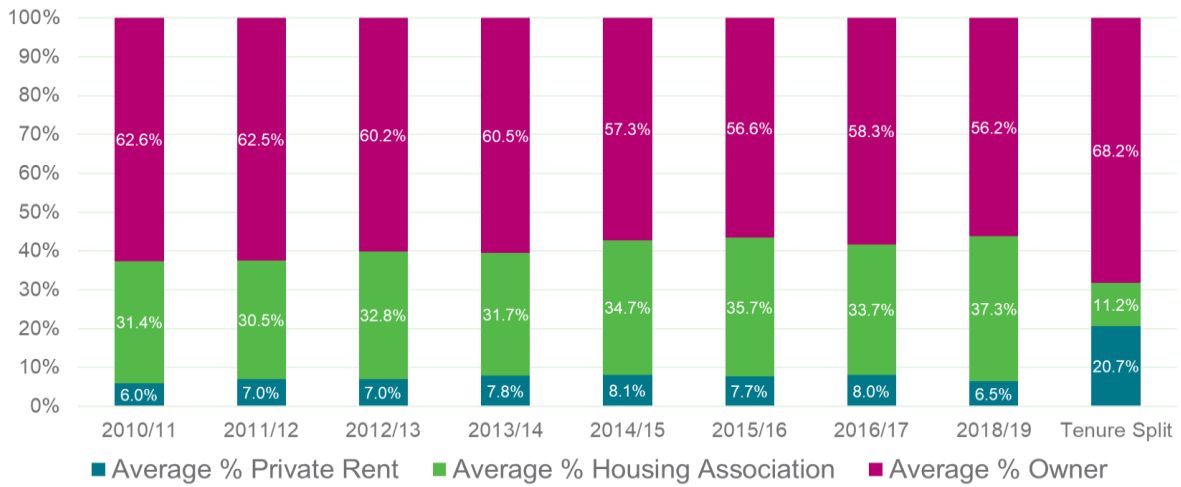
Average Number of Maximum Grants Completed per Local Authority



Since 2008 the maximum permissible amount for a DFG is £30,000. Grants at this value typically fund home extensions to create a ground floor bedroom and shower room for a disabled person who can no longer get safely upstairs.

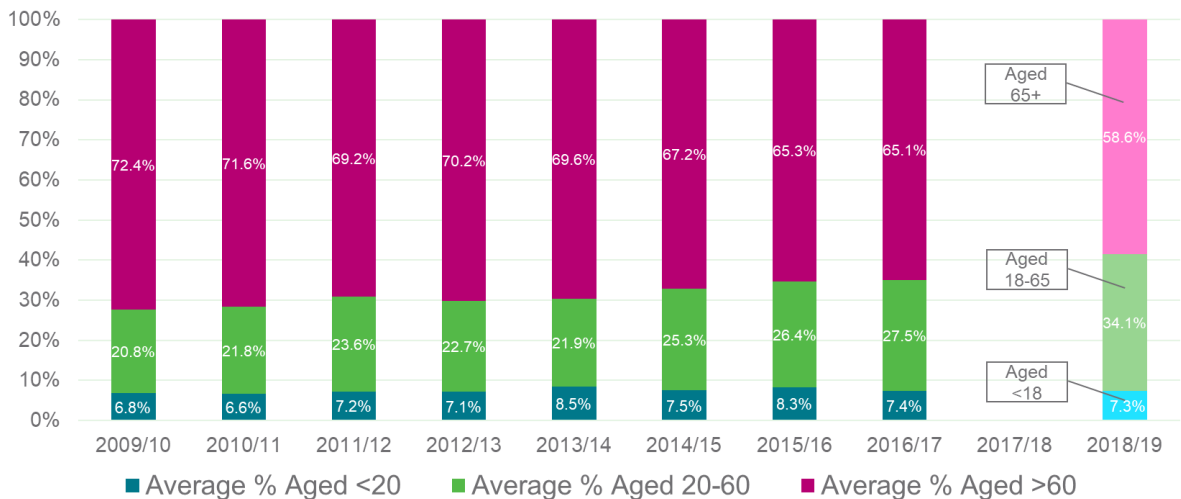
The number of these adaptations has halved over the last decade.

Trend in Tenure of DFG Applicants



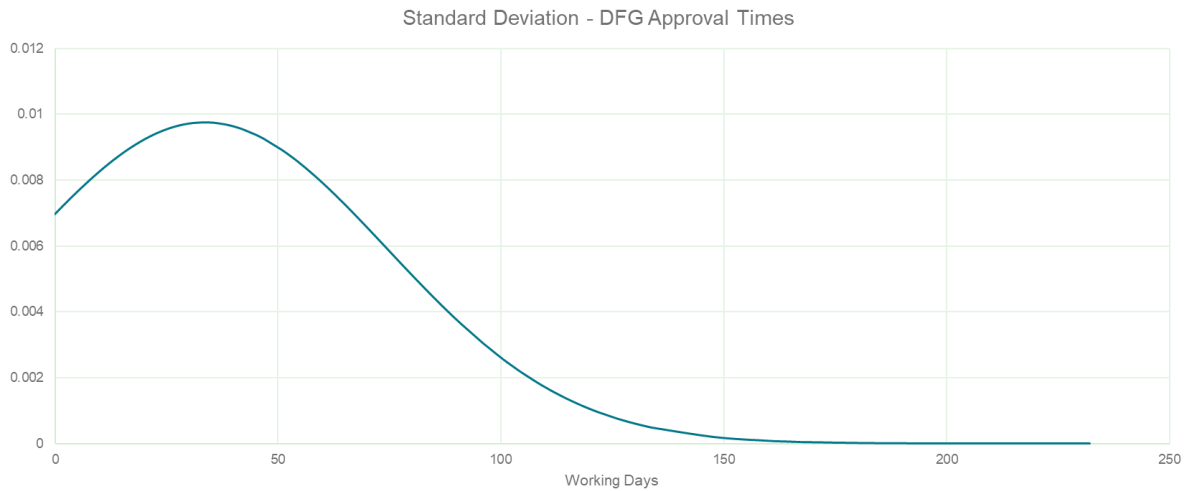
The DFG legislation is tenure neutral, however grants for retained council housing are funded separately through the Housing Revenue Account. The proportion of DFGs awarded to Housing Associations is continuing to increase. After small increases in numbers for the private rented sector in recent years, these fell back again in 2018/19. For reference the end column shows the total proportion of households in England in 2018/19 by tenure.

Trend in Age of DFG Applicants



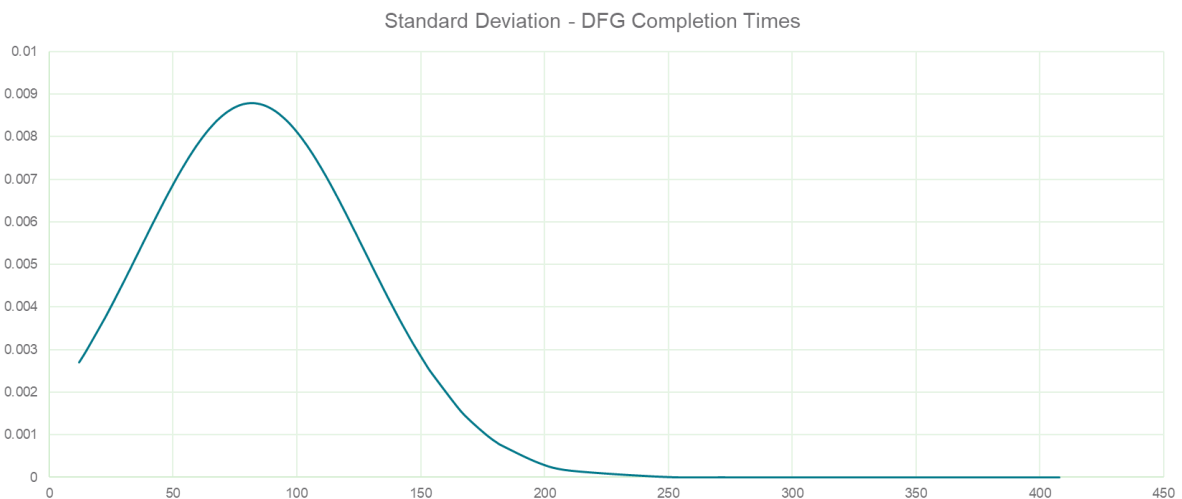
The age ranges for 2018/19 were slightly amended to give figures for children and people of retirement age. However, the continuing trend is for more DFGs to be awarded to people of working age, with a smaller proportion going to older people. Given the ageing demographic this is a trend that would benefit from further investigation.

DFG Approval Times in 2018/19



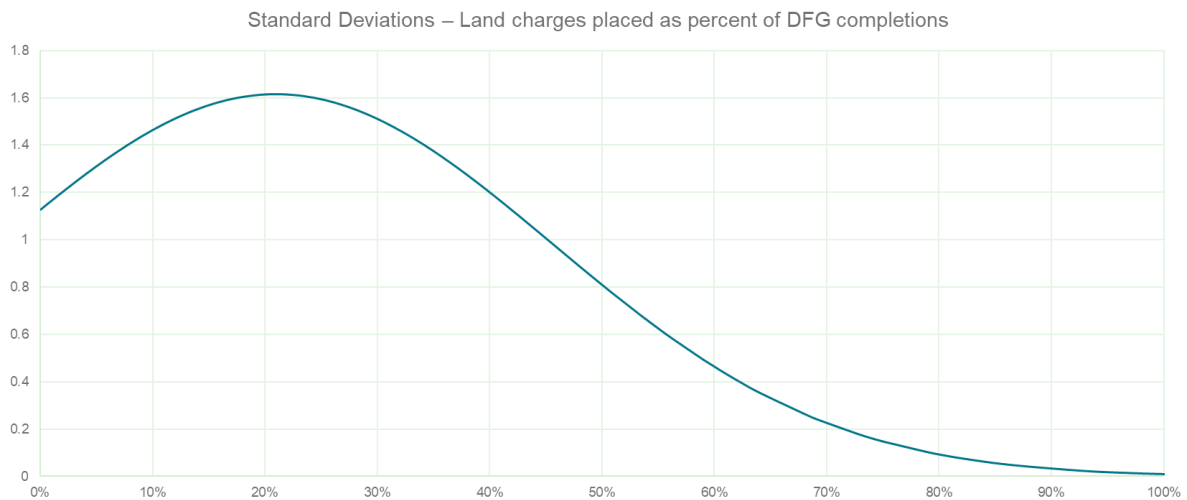
From the date of application, Local Authorities have a maximum period of 6 months (130 working days) to approve or decline. All but 12 authorities meet this target, with an average of 33 working days.

DFG Completion Times in 2018/19



From the date of approval, adaptation works should be completed within 12 months (260 working days), with the good practice guidance recommending within 80 working days. The average in 2018/19 was 81 working days. 4 authorities had an average completion time in excess of 12 months

Local Land Charges Placed in 2018/19



Local Authorities have the discretion to place a local land charge where a DFG is approved for more than £5,000 on an owner-occupied property. The value of the charge is equivalent to the amount in excess of £5,000 and is for a maximum of £10,000. The charge remains in place for up to 10 years and would be payable upon sale of the property.

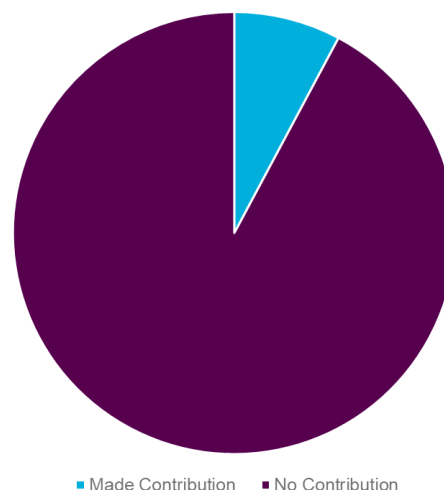
On average, a charge is placed for 21% of DFGs – but for a minority of local authorities a charge is placed for almost every DFG.

DFGs where the Applicant made a Contribution in 2018/19

For anyone over the age of 18 the DFG is means tested. The test is based on Housing Benefit and compares actual income with an assumed figure based on the household situation.

Only 7.8% of applicants made a financial contribution towards the cost of their adaptations in 2018/19. This is down from 14% in 2016/17.

A number of local authorities no longer means test for adaptations under £5k as part of their Housing Assistance Policy.

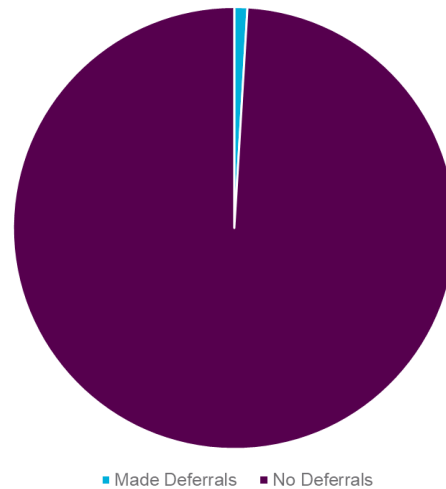


Local Authorities who Deferred Grants in 2018/19

While a Local Authority has to approve a valid application within 6 months, it does have the option to defer making a payment by up to 12 months from the date of application.

This usually only happens where a Local Authority has a fully committed budget and should only be used as a short-term measure.

In 2018/19 only 3 Local Authorities deferred the payment of grants – all London Boroughs.



Use of Occupational Therapists and Trusted Assessors

For the first time, the return asked Local Authorities to report on the number of Occupational Therapists and Trusted Assessors being used to support DFG delivery in 2018/19.

All 125 unitary authorities already employ Occupational Therapists as part of their Social Care teams, but 52 District Councils now also employ Occupational Therapists to carry out assessments for DFGs.

30 of these District Councils also employ Trusted Assessors, supervised by their in-house Occupational Therapists. Another 25 District Councils also used Trusted Assessors.

Across all English Local Authorities 455 Trusted Assessors were carrying out assessments for DFGs in 2018/198/



Foundations

The Old Co-op Building,
11 Railway Street,
Glossop,
Derbyshire, SK13 7AG

www.foundations.uk.com

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