



The DFG Crisis & The Better Care Fund



Reading this could save your
region **£millions** in health &
social care costs next year...

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Are older and disabled people getting the help they really need?

What is the true cost of neglecting their most basic need for a safe home environment?

This paper explores the growing pressure on home adaptations funding and the case for increasing Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding under its new Better Care Funding umbrella.

We have a 'demographic time-bomb'

9.7 million or 18% of the population have a health condition or disability that limits their day to day activities

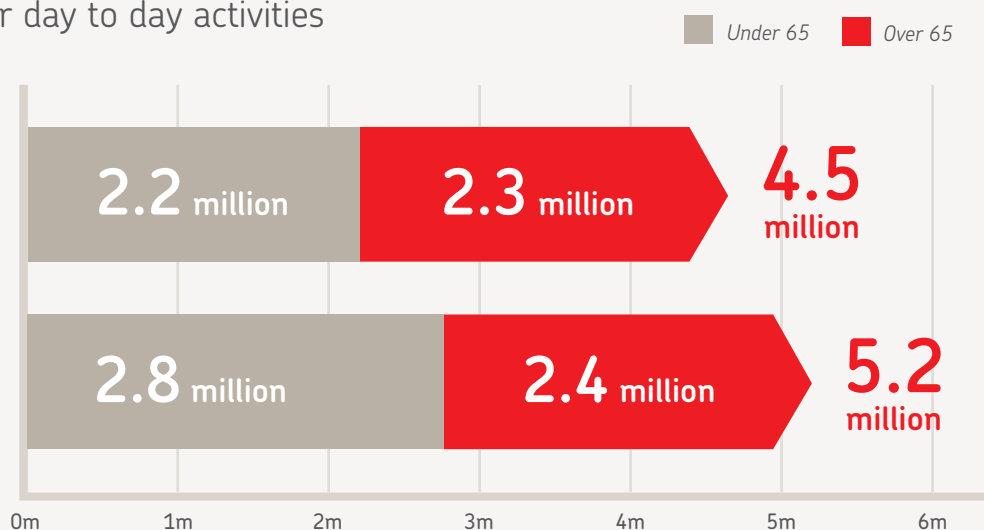
(2011 Census for England & Wales¹)

Major Disability

My day to day activities are limited a lot by a health condition / disability

Minor Disability

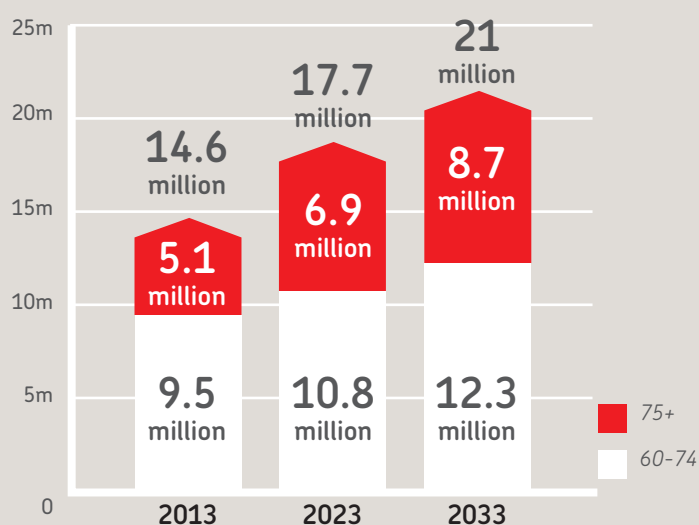
My day to day activities are limited a little by a health condition / disability



The pressure is building

In 20 years time there will be **43% more people aged 60+** (6.3million more people)²

Population projections for the next 20 years show we will have an extra 3.6million people aged 75+ and an extra 2.8million people aged 60-74



These major demographic changes are putting a massive & growing strain on our health and social care resources

The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) that funds major home adaptations is being stretched to its limit. Research into DFG funding in 2011 showed that there is currently only 10% of the funding required to meet the estimated need.³

The result is:

- significant delays in home adaptations in many parts of the country
- many of those in need being denied the adaptations they require
- 1,000's moving into residential care years earlier than they would have done, often at great personal & social cost as well as economic cost to the state

Huge pressure on limited DFG funding has led to a rapidly growing unmet need for home adaptations

In a 2013 survey, leading disability charity The Papworth Trust⁴ interviewed hundreds of disabled and older people, their families and carers about their homes. They found that:



1 in 4

reported that they could not get around their home safely.



2 in 5

respondents said the accessibility of their home meant they needed help to do everyday things like cooking.



1 in 4

of those who received a DFG said they waited **over a year** for it to be approved.



2 in 3

respondents who had not received a grant had never heard of DFGs.

What does this growing unmet need for home adaptations really cost us?

- Unsafe homes are one of the main causes of falls and fractures in people aged 65+
- Falls and fractures in this age group (including 70,000 hip fractures) account for over **4 million hospital bed days** each year in England. Healthcare costs associated with these fragility fractures are estimated at **£2billion a year**
- Falls often lead to reduced functional ability and thus increased dependency on families, carers and services⁵

For every £1million reduction in DFG funding up to 200 vulnerable elderly or disabled people lose the chance to gain vital home adaptations that allow them to live safely & independently.

How protecting and increasing DFG funded home adaptations can save your Health & Wellbeing Board £millions each year

1/ Major health & social care cost savings

Save up to
£4.00
for every £1.00 spent
on adaptations ⁶

Home Care Cost Savings

Home adaptation costs are usually much lower than the home carer costs they eliminate the need for. Savings are often greatest where bathing independence can be maintained.

A
typical home
adaptation can
save up to
£73,000
per person

Residential Care Home Cost Savings

A typical home adaptation, costing £7,000, can delay entry to residential care by up to 4 years, saving up to **£73,000 per person** ⁷ (based on average home costs of £20,000 per year).

A
typical home
adaptation can
reduce the risk of
falls by
60%

Hospitalisation Cost Savings

Replacing baths with level access showers and fitting grab rails around the house etc. **can reduce the risk of falls by 60%** ⁸. With the average cost of a hip fracture being **£28,665** ⁹ savings made from fall reduction alone can be significant.

“ KEY FACT

Newham Social Services in London quoted reductions in the costs of assistance with bathing of £1.98million over 5 years as a result of installing 20 level access showers at a total cost of £110,000 ¹⁰

2/ Investment in DFG can help your Health & Wellbeing Board to secure significant additional funding next year

From 2015-16 onwards, **£1billion of the £3.8billion Better Care Funding awarded to HWBs will be performance-based**, and will be measured against a number of factors ¹¹ including:

1. Avoidable emergency admissions (composite measure) including reduction in the number of falls in the home
2. Reduced permanent care home admissions per 100,000 of aged 65+ population against previous 12 months
3. Proportion of people aged 65+ still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services

It's not too late to act...

Most Local Authorities contribute significant additional resources to their share of the £200 million DFG funding from central government.

This additional local authority money accounts for **40–60% of total DFG** funding in each area (even more in a few cases), and in total amounted to £118 million¹² in 2011–12 – facilitating up to 30,000 major home adaptations.



This matched funding will continue after the Department of Health takes responsibility for allocating central government DFG funding subsidies. This local authority matched DFG funding is vital to ensure essential home adaptations are made available for more people in need, reducing the burden on local social care and health resources.

Heath & Wellbeing Boards need to be aware of their local DFG resource levels and to ensure that this matched funding continues. Where demand is currently out-stripping supply, they may also choose to top-up the fund with additional resources from the new Better Care Fund (BCF).

BCF plans are being drawn up now by every Health & Wellbeing Board – the deadline is April 2014.

If vital DFG top-ups in your region are not being allocated now for 2015 then far fewer essential home adaptations will be made, significantly increasing the burden on your local social care and health resources.

So what can I do?

To protect your area's extra DFG funding and the vulnerable people whose lives it transforms please ask at your next Health & Wellbeing Board meeting:

- How much extra money is your local authority and/or HWB committing to top-up your area's DFG funding from central government?
- How does this compare to last year?
- Does it meet local needs?
- What is the waiting list for DFG funded adaptations?

If you need more information supporting a case for your area to top-up DFG with additional funding then please don't hesitate to contact us for more information:

Email: hwbaction@akw-ltd.co.uk **Join the debate on Twitter:** [#HWBAction](https://twitter.com/HWBAction)

Sources

- 1 ONS Census (2011)
- 2 ONS Population Projection (2010)
- 3 DCLG (2011) Disabled Facilities Grant allocation methodology and means test: Final report, London: DCLG. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/1850571.pdf>
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- 6 Appleton, A, Leather P and Mackintosh S 'Evaluation of the Independent Living Grant (ILG)' – commissioned by The Welsh Assembly (2012)
- 7 Lean Enterprise Research Centre, Cardiff Business School 'Lean and Systems Thinking in the Public Sector in Wales' (Page 15) (2010)
- 8 Handyperson Financial benefits Toolkit, O'Leary C, Linney J & Weiss A, 2010, DCLG, also cited in The costs and benefits of preventative support services for older people, Pleace N, 2011, University of York. (2010)
- 9 Heywood, F. and Turner, L., Better outcomes, lower costs: Implications for health and social care budgets of investments in housing adaptations, improvements and equipment: a review of the evidence, Office for Disability Issues (2007)
- 10 The Home Adaptations Consortium 'Home Adaptations for Disabled People –Equality and Excellence in Future Provision' (2010)
- 11 NHS England Better Care Fund Planning templates
- 12 DCLG statistics including Table 314