



DFG and Dementia Design

09/12/2025

The Disabled Facilities Grant and its link to the BCF Policy Framework

Objective 1: reform to support the shift from sickness to prevention
Objective 2: reform to support people living independently and the shift from hospital to home

The DFG:

- A housing grant designed to support older people, adults, and children with physical, cognitive, and sensory disabilities or impairments.
- Funds home adaptations based on 12 key purposes, all aimed at enhancing functional independence, accessibility, and safety within the home environment.
- **Flexible use of the DFG** can support a HIA or adaptations service to provide other housing solutions for older and disabled people around prevention, hospital discharge, and hospital avoidance.
- Became part of the BCF in 2015, and since then there has been a significant increase in central government resources: £86 mil. announced at 2025/26 budget, bringing the annual total to £711 mil.

The Benefits of Adapting Existing Homes

Familiarity supports orientation and emotional well-being, preserves routines and social connections, can be tailored to the individual, and is often quicker than relocating.



The Downside of Adapting Existing Homes

Physical constraints may require compromise, some properties aren't suitable for significant adaptation, installation can be disruptive, and solutions may not anticipate future needs.

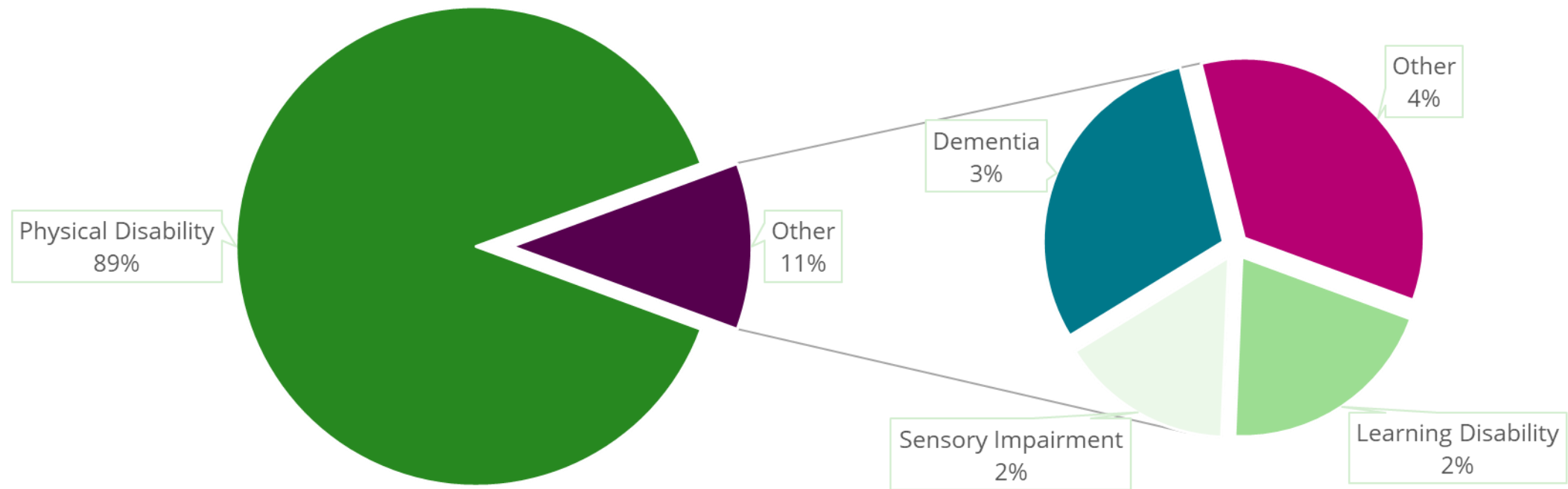


Why Home Adaptations Matter for People with Dementia

- The home environment can either support or undermine independence, safety and well-being for someone living with dementia.
- **Thoughtful** adaptations can reduce confusion, support independence, prevent falls, ease caregiving, and help people remain at home longer.
- The goal is to create an environment that compensates for cognitive changes while preserving dignity, choice and familiarity.



Primary impairment for DFG applications



Principles for Dementia-Friendly Adaptations

Familiarity over novelty — work with existing routines and preferences where possible

Simplicity — reduce clutter and complexity in the environment

Good lighting — even, consistent lighting reduces shadows and confusion

Contrast — use colour and tonal contrast to highlight important features

Calm — minimise sensory overload from noise, patterns and reflections

Personalisation — solutions should reflect the individual, not a generic checklist



Common Architectural Barriers in the Home

Layout: Toilet not visible or easily found from main living spaces, bedrooms and bathrooms on different floors, cluttered or narrow hallways restricting movement.

Lighting: Dim hallways and landings, poor lighting on stairs, no easy way to light the route to the bathroom at night, and glare from uncovered windows.

Flooring: Rugs and mats creating trip hazards, changes in floor colour between rooms appearing as steps, and busy carpet patterns causing visual confusion.

Stairs: Steep or narrow staircases, lack of handrails on both sides, poor contrast on treads, no landing light or two-way switches.



Common Architectural Barriers in the Home

Doors and thresholds: Internal doors that all look the same, raised thresholds between rooms, back door steps without handrails.

Bathroom: Over-bath shower requiring high step-over, poor contrast between white fittings and white walls, confusing or stiff tap controls, no grab rails.

Kitchen: Controls on cooker that are hard to understand or see, cluttered worktops, poor task lighting.

Garden access: Steps down to the garden without handrails, unsecured gate or boundary, uneven paths.



Matching Adaptations to Functional Need

Memory and sequencing: Labels, contrasting colours, simplified controls, medication prompts, wayfinding signage.

Spatial awareness: Consistent flooring, avoid busy patterns, good surface contrast, and reduce reflective surfaces.

Safety and risk: Thermostatic taps, cooker isolation, door/window sensors, secure outdoor spaces.

Night-time disorientation: Motion-activated lighting, illuminated toilet seats, clear routes, contrasting bedding.

Mobility and falls: Grab rails, level thresholds, bilateral stair rails, walk-in showers.





Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities



Department
of Health &
Social Care



**Disabled Facilities
Grant (DFG) delivery:**

**Guidance for
Local Authorities
in England**

The Disabled Facilities Grant and assistive technology

Chapter 7: The Disabled Facilities Grant and assistive technology

Assistive technology

- 7.1 According to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), the term 'assistive technology' refers to 'products or systems that support and assist individuals with disabilities, restricted mobility or other impairments to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible'.
- 7.2 Assistive technologies enable people to live healthy, productive, independent and dignified lives. They can help people participate in education and the labour market as well as stay in contact with family, friends and carers and use online services to access shopping, entertainment and information.
- 7.3 There is a large market in specialist assistive technology, offering a wide range of products and services to help disabled people in their everyday lives. In addition, mainstream technologies also often have features that can be beneficial for disabled people.
- 7.4 Assistive technology can be included as part of a DFG award package to maximise the benefits of home adaptations. This is a non-exhaustive list of examples of specialist and mainstream assistive technologies that can be provided through the Grant. The examples are organised according to the different DFG purposes they support.

Smart homes technology

The range of technology available to control the functions of a home have increased significantly since the DFG was first introduced in 1990. The cost of equipment has also decreased as use of assistive technology has become more mainstream. For example, a system to manage and monitor the internal environment that used to cost several thousand pounds can now be achieved for less than £300.

Local authorities should consider the most appropriate way to provide smart technology where it is not part of a larger adaptation, and whether an application for DFG is the most cost effective way to do so. Some areas include a streamlined grant within their Housing Assistance Policy (see Chapter 3.).

The DFG is a capital grant and authorities should also take into account their de-minimis limits and the ongoing costs of any maintenance or monitoring.

Dementia grants

Many local authorities already include dementia grants within their housing assistance policies. They are typically preventative in nature and allow for adaptations to be provided with a diagnosis of dementia and before the condition escalates to the point where a DFG would otherwise become necessary.

The extent and cost of the works are usually relatively small (often less than £1,000) and involve a streamlined application process. The most common types of modification are:

- Labels and signs on doors and cupboards
- Task focussed lighting in bathrooms and kitchens
- Items of assistive technology, e.g. to provide reminders and to monitor activity
- Safer flooring
- Decoration to improve contrast between walls and floors
- Installing coloured fixtures to create a contrast for items like toilet seats and grabrails

These simple changes can help to keep someone living safely at home for longer, delaying the need for more costly care services or a move into residential care.

How the DFG Allocation Can Be Spent

Providing housing assistance in accordance with a locally published Housing Assistance Policy under RRO powers. Examples of housing assistance in local housing assistance policies includes:

Small Repairs: Repairs to the home that are necessary for the appropriate use of DFG funded adaptations.

Dementia Grants: Preventative modifications to make a home more suitable for someone with dementia.

Assistive Technology: e.g. smart home devices to automate heating, lighting, and power control.

Pooled Funding: Pooled fund with social care for things like ramps that could be minor adapts or DFG funded.

Home Safety: Preventative modifications around the home to prevent falls and improve safety.


Hospital Discharge: Assistance to support early discharge from hospital including deep cleaning, decluttering, heating repairs, furniture removal etc.

Top Up Funding: To assist with supporting high-cost cases that go above the £30,000 mandatory grant.

Warm Homes and Energy Efficiency Loans and Grants: To improve the energy efficiency of properties, replace inefficient heating systems including boilers, radiators, control elements, and loft and/or cavity wall insulation.




Home Automation & The DFG

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Foundations LIVE, 9 December 2025
Our annual review on services and funding that can help you support residents living in cold and damp homes. Including an overview of Awaab's law and what that means for Home Improvement Agency services. Join us from 2pm **Tuesday 9 December** for Foundations LIVE.



Home > Guides > Home Automation



The Association for Smart Home Professionals™

Guidance from CEDIA

This guidance has been prepared by **CEDIA**, on behalf of **Foundations** to provide an understanding of the options available for automating a home and how to access professional expertise to design an integrated system. It is for organisations and personnel involved in **Home Adaptations**.

Guidance on Home Automation

Contents

- **What are Home Automations?**
- **The Disabled Facilities Grant and Home Adaptations**
- **The Advantages of Professional Design and Installation**
- **Home Automation Options**
- **Case Studies**
- **Further support**

What is Home Automation?

Home automation is all about making everyday tasks around the house easier – adjusting lights, controlling heating, opening doors – without needing complex systems or constant monitoring. Unlike assistive technology, which often focuses on keeping an eye out for safety, home automation is designed to help people do things independently and smoothly.

This focus on home automation is a great fit with the Disabled Facilities Grants “purpose”, allowing funding to go towards practical, user-friendly upgrades that make life at home simpler and more comfortable. By supporting independence in carrying out day-to-day activities, home automation helps create spaces where people can feel both capable and at ease.

Learn more about CEDIA >

The Disabled Facilities Grant and Home Automations

The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is there to help make homes more accessible and manageable for people with disabilities, and assistive technology is a big part of that. As the DFG guidance outlines, home automations can mean anything from automated door openers to smart thermostats – all designed to help people move around their homes, manage everyday tasks, and stay comfortable with minimal support.

The guidance also points to how these automations can make controlling lighting, power, and heating much simpler. For example, smart lighting systems can turn on or adjust brightness automatically, while smart thermostats can learn temperature preferences and adjust themselves based on occupancy. These kinds of features go beyond simple functionality; they aim to make life a little easier, without the constant need for assistance or supervision.

Bringing Automation and Accessibility Together

Where home automation adds value is in making the whole home environment more adaptable and intuitive. It takes assistive technology a step further by creating an integrated system that can help people stay independent and comfortable. For example, voice-activated controls or automated light switches can make everyday routines smoother and give individuals more control over their surroundings.

It's worth noting that the DFG typically covers installation and setup costs for these adaptations but not ongoing expenses, such as subscription services. However, there are often local and national options to support those costs, like partnerships with social services or discretionary funding through local authorities.

What is CEDIA?

Think of CEDIA members as the architects of home automation. Just as an architect carefully designs a house to meet individual needs and lifestyle, a CEDIA smart home professional designs and installs home automation systems that bring comfort, accessibility, and independence. From setting up voice-activated controls to ensuring seamless integration of lighting, heating, and other devices, CEDIA members focus on creating systems tailored to each person's unique requirements and needs.

With their expertise, CEDIA professionals don't just install smart devices – they design a comprehensive, user-friendly environment that works smoothly and intuitively. They plan, install, and support these systems, making sure each part of the home works together seamlessly, much like a well-designed building. For those eligible under the Disabled Facilities

Home Automation & The DFG

Prompts and reminders: Voice-activated reminders, medication prompts, automated alerts for appointments or mealtimes.

Safety monitoring: Door, window and flood sensors, linked smoke alarms, automatic or remote cooker isolation.

Lighting: Motion-activated lights on key routes, timed lighting to support day-night orientation.

Temperature and comfort: Smart thermostats, remote heating monitoring, automated blinds.

The screenshot displays the CEDIA website's 'Guidance from CEDIA' page. At the top, a green banner reads 'FOUNDATIONS LIVE, 9 DECEMBER 2023' and mentions an annual review of services and funding. Below this, a breadcrumb trail shows 'Home > Guides > Home Automation'. The CEDIA logo, 'The Association for Smart Home Professionals™', is prominently displayed. To the right, a section titled 'Guidance from CEDIA' states that the guidance is prepared by CEDIA on behalf of Foundations to provide an understanding of the options available for automating a home and how to access professional expertise to design an integrated system. Below this, the 'Guidance on Home Automation' section is visible, featuring a 'Contents' sidebar with links to 'What are Home Automations?', 'The Disabled Facilities Grant and Home Automations', 'The Advantages of Professional Design and Installation', 'Home Automation Options', 'Case Studies', and 'Further support'. The main content area includes a 'What is Home Automation?' section, which explains that home automation is about making everyday tasks around the house easier—adjusting lights, controlling heating, opening doors—without needing complex systems or constant monitoring. It also mentions that unlike assistive technology, which often focuses on keeping an eye out for safety, home automation is designed to help people do things independently and smoothly. A 'Learn more about CEDIA >' button is located at the bottom of this section. Further down, the 'The Disabled Facilities Grant and Home Automations' section is partially visible, starting with the text 'The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is there to help make homes more accessible and manageable for people with disabilities, and assistive technology is a big part of that. As the DFG guidance outlines, home automations can mean anything from automated door openers to smart thermostats—all designed to help people move around their homes, manage everyday tasks, and stay comfortable with minimal support.'

Home Automation

Communication and reassurance: Video doorbells, one-touch calling, voice assistants for orientation and companionship.

Supporting carers: Remote check-ins, activity monitoring, alerts for unusual patterns.

Key considerations: Keep it simple, involve the person in decisions, plan for changing needs.

The screenshot displays a webpage titled 'FOUNDATIONS LIVE, 9th DECEMBER 2023'. The header includes a green navigation bar with a logo and text: 'Our annual review of services and funding that can help you support residents living in cold and damp homes. Including an overview of Award's role and what that means for Home Improvement Agency services. Join us from 2pm Tuesday 9 December for Foundations LIVE'. Below the header, the main content area features the CEDIA logo (The Association for Smart Home Professionals™) and a section titled 'Guidance from CEDIA'. This section states: 'This guidance has been prepared by CEDIA, on behalf of Foundations to provide an understanding of the options available for automating a home and how to access professional expertise to design an integrated system. It is for organisations and personnel involved in Home Adaptations.' Below this, there is a 'Guidance on Home Automation' section with a 'Contents' sidebar listing: 'What are Home Adaptations?', 'The Disabled Facilities Grant and Home Automations', 'The Advantages of Professional Design and Installation', 'Home Automation Options', 'Case Studies', and 'Further support'. The main text under 'What is Home Automation?' explains that home automation is about making everyday tasks around the house easier—adjusting lights, controlling heating, opening doors—without needing complex systems or constant monitoring. It notes that unlike assistive technology, which often focuses on keeping an eye out for safety, home automation is designed to help people do things independently and smoothly. It also mentions that this focus on home automation is a great fit with the Disabled Facilities Grants 'purpose', allowing funding to go towards practical, user-friendly upgrades that make life at home simpler and more comfortable. By supporting independence in carrying out day-to-day activities, home automation helps create spaces where people can feel both capable and at ease. A 'Learn more about CEDIA' button is present. At the bottom, there is a section titled 'The Disabled Facilities Grant and Home Automations' which states that the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is there to help make homes more accessible and manageable for people with disabilities, and assistive technology is a big part of that. As the DFG guidance outlines, home automations can mean anything from automated door openers to smart thermostats—all designed to help people move around their homes, manage everyday tasks, and stay comfortable with minimal support. It also points to how these automations can make controlling lighting, power, and heating much simpler. For example, smart lighting systems can turn on or adjust brightness automatically, while smart thermostats can learn temperature preferences and adjust themselves based on occupancy. These kinds of features go beyond simple functionality; they aim to make life a little easier, without the constant need for assistance or supervision. A 'What is CEDIA?' section at the bottom right explains that CEDIA members are the architects of home automation, just as an architect carefully designs a house to meet individual needs and lifestyle, a CEDIA smart home professional designs and installs home automation systems that bring comfort, accessibility, and independence. From setting up voice-activated controls to ensuring advanced...



Thank you