

WashPod and the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

What is WashPod?

WashPod is a range of modular, temporary disabled wetrooms designed by Dignity Access. These units can be installed quickly and without structural adaptations, making them ideal for urgent or interim needs. They are available for purchase or rental and can be funded under the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

DFG Eligibility and Legal Framework

- WashPod can be funded by the DFG under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
- It enables access to essential hygiene facilities and supports independent living.
- Some councils exercise their discretion under the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) 2002 for broader, preventative purposes.
- Legislation does not state that adaptations must be permanent, removable adaptations such as WashPods and stairlifts can be funded with DFG.
- The unit can be removed and reused when no longer needed (in a similar manner to stairlifts), as long as this is explained to the service user and it is agreeable.

Strategic Benefits for Local Authorities

- Rapid installation (1–5 days), on site within 2–6 weeks.
- Avoids delays in hospital discharge or care home admission.
- Minimises disruption and avoids permanent alterations.
- Cost effective rental from £220 - £450 per week (not via DFG).
- DFG Turnaround Service available for streamlined procurement.
- Modular and reusable, similar to stairlifts.
- Turnkey solution includes installation, removal, and making good.
- Supports Better Care Fund's focus on prevention.
- Benefits felt by Health & Social Care, not just Housing.
- Landlords more likely to approve due to non-invasive design.

Assessment and Ownership Considerations

- Assessments can be carried out by independent Occupational Therapists to avoid any perceived conflict of interest, however the council may wish to conduct their own assessment.
- OT assessments and recommendations are based on the key premise of whether adaptations are:
 - Necessary and Appropriate
 - Reasonable and Practicable
- Local authorities can apply discretion to fund any adaptations they wish under the RRO, so long as they state this in their local Housing Assistance Policy.

Legal and Policy Clarifications

- DFG **CAN** be used to purchase WashPods, which can then be signed over to the local authority if agreed by the service user.
- A solution does not have to be permanent to be permissible under DFG legislation.
- A good Housing Assistance Policy enables flexibility and discretion.
- Authorities must not search for reasons to refuse a grant but assess in good faith.
- A general consent in DFG legislation allows councils to reclaim equipment like WashPod if it is no longer needed.

Quote from Judicial Review of a DFG case in Islington in 2018

“The existence of mandatory grants is extremely rare, and that rarity illustrates that the mindset of the decision-making authority must not be to search for grounds to refuse the grant but in good faith to limit its examination to the relevant matters.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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