

From: The Minister

Pádraig Delargy MLA
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont

Dear Pádraig,

AQW 42086/22-27 – INFORMATION TO BE PLACED IN THE ASSEMBLY LIBRARY

Due to the volume of detail required to answer AQW 42086/ 22-27, the information attached at Annex A has been placed in the Assembly Library.

Yours sincerely,



**Gordon Lyons MLA
Minister for Communities**

This issue is an operational matter for the Housing Executive.

I have sought the requested information from the Chief Executive, who has advised me as follows:

“(i) The Housing Executive has provided details for the last three financial years of:

a) The number of **Home Improvement Grants** applications received:

Applications Received					
Year / Grant	Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	Renovation	Replacement	Home Repair Assistance (HRA)	Repair
2023 - 2024	2202	1	-	60	278
2024 - 2025	2046	2	-	8	283
2025 - 09/03/26	1884	7	-	10	221

b) the number of **Home Improvement Grants** applications approved:

Applications Approved					
Year / Grant	Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	Renovation	Replacement	Home Repair Assistance (HRA)	Repair
2023 - 2024	805	6	-	-	270
2024 - 2025	812	7	-	-	286
2025 - 09/03/26	757	4	-	-	223

Disabled Facilities Grants

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) are a demand led service where an application can only be started when a Health Trust Occupational Therapist's (OT) referral for adaptations is received. For this grant, we have included the number of referrals in part (a) as the number of applications received. It should be noted that many referrals received do not progress to approval stage, leading to a cancellation. The number and reasons for cancellations are dealt with in part (c).

Repair Grants

A Repair Grant is available to help with repairs to houses after a local council has issued a statutory notice. Repair Grants are demand led and can only be initiated by a local Council statutory notice; there is no direct application process to the Housing Executive.

Discretionary Grants (Renovation, Replacement and Home Repair Assistance)

From 2022/23 to date, funding constraints have been applied to the Private Sector Grants programme, mostly impacting the discretionary Home Improvement Grants - Renovation, Replacement and Home Repair Assistance. Since then, funding constraints have meant that no new discretionary grants can be considered unless the application is directly linked to the delivery of a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant. Consideration will be given only where there are significant health and safety risks and where funding is available at the time of application.

It must be noted that there is a timing difference between applications received and the issue of approvals which may cross financial years / period.

c) The number of Home Improvement Grants cancelled:

Applications Cancelled					
Year / Grant	Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	Renovation	Replacement	Home Repair Assistance (HRA)	Repair
2023 - 2024	1986	112	6	34	41
2024 - 2025	1814	14	1	1	70
2025 - 09/03/26	1526	7	0	6	29

The Housing Executive does not ‘refuse’ applications for Home Improvement Grants (HIG’s), a grants case, in its life cycle may be cancelled. There are various reasons a grant case may be cancelled including, and not limited to, the work is not possible, an applicant’s contribution to works is greater than the value of eligible grant-aid available, applicant’s circumstances change, work is too disruptive for the applicant, no response to contact or an applicant may have passed away before the works had started / completed. The top three reasons for cancellation are at an applicant’s request, contribution too high and failure of the applicant to respond.

The Housing Executive has provided details for the last three financial years of:

*d) The number of **Affordable Warmth Scheme** applications received, approvals issued and cases cancelled:*

Year	Applications Received	Approvals issued	Cancelled Cases **
2023 - 2024*	4,431	2,674	943
2024 - 2025	2,974	2,118	1,049
2025 – 2026~	1,832	1,074	887

** For the period 1 April 2023 to 31 August 2023 Affordable Warmth was a targeted scheme. Local councils had responsibility for targeting, assessing eligibility and referring customers to the Housing Executive. The scheme’s enquiry process changed in 2023. Since 1 September 2023, all private sector households who contact the Housing Executive’s freephone Energy Advice Service are assessed for potential eligibility. Those who present as eligible, and therefore may benefit from*

the Affordable Warmth Scheme, are transferred to the grants team to pursue a possible application.

~ The information requested includes Affordable Warmth Scheme figures which forms part of the quarterly and annual compendium publication of housing statistics. Section 13(1) of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007, states that ‘the person producing any official statistics which are designated under section 12 as National Statistics must ensure that the Code of Practice for Statistics under section 10 continues to be complied with in relation to the statistics.’ Provision of this data before publication of the National / Official Statistic to which it relates would be a failure to comply with the Code in respect of T3: Orderly release. Information for Q4 of 2025-26 is likely to be made available in June 2026. All figures provided therefore reflect the period 1 April 2023 to 31 December 2025.

*** There are several reasons why an Affordable Warmth Grant may be cancelled. These include applicants not meeting the qualifying criteria such as owning their home or having a household income below £23,000 choosing not to proceed with the works due to the level of disruption involved, or after completion of a technical assessment at the home, there are no energy efficiency measures to recommend.*

(ii) The Housing Executive has provided details for the last three financial years of:

*The average processing times for **Home Improvement Grants** are below. Please note that some of the timeframes are outside of the Housing Executives control as we rely on the applicant to provide application information, obtain statutory approvals, appoint the contractor and complete the works.*

Disabled Facilities Grant: average processing days from date Occupational Therapist recommendation received date to approval date.

Year / Grant	Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)
2023 - 2024	523
2024 - 2025	468
2025 – 09/03/26	434

Renovation Grant: average processing days from enquiry date to approved date.

Year / Grant	Renovation Grant
2023 - 2024	754
2024 - 2025	1019
2025 – 09/03/26	740

Repair Grant: average processing days from date application received to approval date.

Year / Grant	Repair Grant
2023 - 2024	110
2024 - 2025	262
2025 – 09/03/26	60

Processing time data is unavailable for **Home Repair Assistance and Replacement** grants as there was no cases approved during the specified timeframe.

a) The average processing times for the **Affordable Warmth Scheme**. Please note that some of the timeframes are outside of the Housing Executives control due to budget restrictions and as we rely on the applicant to provide application information, obtain statutory approvals, appoint the contractor and complete the works.

Year / Grant	Affordable Warmth Scheme
2023 - 2024	84
2024 - 2025	174
2025 – 09/03/26	150

For the period 1 April 2023 to 31 August 2023 Affordable Warmth was a targeted scheme. Local councils had responsibility for targeting, assessing eligibility and referring customers to the Housing Executive. The scheme's enquiry process changed in 2023. Since 1 September 2023, all private sector households who contact the Housing Executive's freephone Energy Advice Service are assessed for potential eligibility.

During the 2024–25 financial year, no approvals were issued in May, June, or July due to the absence of confirmed budget allocation and as instructed by DfC. As a result, all new cases remained at the approval-offer stage, which significantly increased overall processing times.

A similar issue occurred at the start of the 2025–26 financial year. No approvals were issued in April, and only “no heating” cases were approved in May and June, again contributing to processing delays.

Due to limited funding, applications are assessed using a priority system agreed with the Department for Communities to ensure assistance is directed to those with the greatest level of need.

Current approval priorities are:

- 1. Households with no heating or with a broken oil or gas boiler*
- 2. Households using Economy 7, LPG, or solid fuel who are moving to a new oil or gas system*
- 3. Homes receiving multiple Priority 1 insulation measures*
- 4. Homes receiving a single Priority 1 insulation measure*
- 5. Homes requiring Priority 2 heating upgrades or replacements*
- 6. Homes needing Priority 3 single-glazed window replacements*

Since the introduction of this prioritisation in September 2023, lower-priority cases cannot be approved until all higher-priority applications have been processed. This has contributed to an increase in average processing times.”