

Disabled Facilities Grant | Repair Renovation | Replacement | Home Repair

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How are Grants working under COVID-19?

During lockdown our Grants Offices were only able to address **emergency cases** that met a grant scheme's criteria.

If you were provided with grant-aid as an emergency case we can now arrange to inspect your property, if applicable, to review work undertaken to date.

What's the Housing Executive's responsibility?

The Housing Executive administers grants on behalf of the Department for Communities.

It will agree the works which can be grant aided, the total grant-aid payable and make payment(s) at the appropriate time to the payees you tell us to.

The Housing Executive is **not responsible** for contractors; contractors are employed by you.

How do I communicate with the Housing Executive?

Once we receive a referral from your OT or an enquiry about a grant from you, we will contact you by telephone and email.

During this difficult time to reduce risk and allow more electronic processing we would ask that additional information / documentation which is requested is, where possible, sent to us by email.

Restrictions on email size

PLEASE NOTE there is a restriction on the size of email which we can receive. Therefore you must ensure that one email's total size does not exceed 30MB. This means you may need to send more than one email.

If you need to send more than one email it is vital that each email you send contains the same subject title detailing:

- the grant's reference number; and
- each email is marked as 1 of 4; 2 of 4, etc.

Grant Office emails:

Belfast / South East belfast.grants@nihe.gov.uk

Council areas:

Belfast City Council | Lisburn City and Castlereagh | Ards and North Down

Derry/Londonderry derry-londonderrygrants@nihe.gov.uk

Council area: Derry City and Strabane

North East northeast.grants@nihe.gov.uk

Council areas:

Antrim and Newtownabbey | Mid and East Antrim | Causeway Coast & Glens

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South

south.grants@nihe.gov.uk

Council areas:

Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon | Newry, Mourne and Down

What if I don't have an email address?

The most well-known webmail providers are *Gmail*, *Outlook.com* (formerly known as Hotmail), and *Yahoo! Mail*. All of these services are free to use.

If you need help to set up an email address you can get help from:

- [nidirect](#) [*opens and external webpage*]- the Government's website on setting up an email account; or
- A member of your family or a friend may be able to help you set one up.

What if I find it difficult to work a computer?

We are increasingly moving services online to help process applications quickly and efficiently.

If you're having difficulty we'd encourage you to ask for help from family in the first place. If you decide to do this we will need your permission to communicate with a family member. You must tell us who you wish to nominate to act as your representative.

You may choose to use the extra support given free of charge by one of the [Home Improvement Agencies](#) (Radius / Gable). Again you will need to confirm in writing we can speak to them about your application.

If you are unable to use any of these options, we will work with you to ensure your application is completed. Please talk to us on **03448 920 900** (Textphone 18001 03448 920 900) about other options.

When can I start work?

DO NOT start work until you have received confirmation **in writing by email** that you qualify for grant-aid.

The Housing Executive will not pay for any work started / completed in your house before you have received written permission which will be emailed to you.

I don't want / can't have people in the house

If you are shielding, quarantining or are not comfortable yet to have someone inspect your home please tell us. We will arrange an appointment when it is suitable for you

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Post COVID-19: FAQs for Grants (V1.2)

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What will happen before you visit / inspect my home?

The Housing Executive will contact you to arrange an appointment to visit and inspect your home for measures which may be grant-aided.

Before the visit takes place we will:

- Write to you by *email* to confirm the date
- Send details of Covid-19 related information
- Contact you 24-48 hours in advance of our visit to complete a Covid-19 assessment

Before entering your home our Case / Technical Officer will

- Put on PPE, this includes gloves and a face covering (mask)
- Sanitise their hands and any equipment to be used
- Complete a final check that you are content they enter
- Show you their work pass



What Covid related questions will you ask?

We will ask:

1. Are you willing to let a member of Housing Executive staff into your home?
2. Have you or a member of your household tested positive for Covid-19 in the last 4 weeks?
3. Are any members of your household experiencing any [symptoms of Covid 19](#) [opens nirect]?
4. Have you or any members of your household recently returned to Northern Ireland?

Where will I find out more about travelling and self-isolation?

This link

www.nirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-countries-and-territories-exemptions

should be used to find the most up-to-date information about those countries which you can travel from and do not require self-isolation.

What will happen during an inspection?

The technical assessment may take up to 60 minutes depending on your property's size, type, location and application needs.

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Post COVID-19: FAQs for Grants (V1.2)

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Depending on the application our Technical Officer may need access to all areas / rooms (eg bedrooms, hot press, roof space, boiler/oil tank location) in your property.

When in your home our Technical Officer will:

- Maintain a social distance
- Inform you where they will inspect at each step
- Tell you how they will inspect and what measurements they may need to take

What can I do to help the inspection go smoothly?

Our Technical Officers would appreciate it if you could

- Keep the number of people in the house to a minimum
- Nominate one person to accompany the Officer during the visit – maintaining social distancing
- Have all internal doors open to keep touching surfaces to a minimum
- Open gates, doors and windows when asked
- Keep busy areas (hall / stairs / landing) free of people

Who is responsible for Health & Safety / Social Distancing

You contractor is obliged to ensure that the site is maintained at a high standard of health and safety throughout the job observing Health & Safety regulations.

This includes implementing social distancing measures.

For more information on COVID-19 and social distancing go to the Public Health Agency website:

www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus

When will any outstanding grant-aid monies be paid?

During Covid-19 lockdown the Housing Executive arranged to make part payment for completed work without an inspection.

The Housing Executive is now able to resume technical inspections. There is a considerable back-up in cases and we are currently organising inspections for those properties where some grant-aid money was paid in order to pay the rest of the grant aid.

Completed jobs

We paid a maximum of 90% of the cost of the eligible works. Fees were paid in full with exception of the Warranty Bond Fee.

Partly completed jobs

Where work had started the Housing Executive was able to consider making an interim payment of up to a maximum 75% of the cost of the eligible works. Fees were paid in full with exception of the Warranty Bond Fee. The amount depended on the volume of work completed.

Our Technical Officer will assess the work and arrange the balance to be released when s/he is satisfied the work has been completed in accordance with the specification for the relevant works and the final necessary documents (eg Building Control Certificate/s) have been received.

ANYONE KNOWINGLY MAKING A FALSE STATEMENT TO FRAUDENTLY OBTAIN MONIES IS LIABLE TO PROSECUTION

Any payments made for work which has not been carried out to the satisfaction of the Housing Executive in accordance with Article 68 (4)(a) [*Housing (NI) Order 2003*] may be subject to recoupment action by the Housing Executive in accordance with Article 71 of the Housing (NI) Order 2003 if necessary.

What will the inspection involve?

Our Technical Officer will assess the works carried out and for which a payment was made to ensure that those works have been completed in accordance with the specification for the relevant works.

As part of that assessment our Technical Officer will re-measure and where necessary if any change arises due to the re-measurement any payment previously made will be adjusted accordingly to reflect that change.

This will be accounted for when the final balance of the grant payable is due to be released.

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Use of the extra support service (Radius / Gable)

If the extra support service (Radius / Gable) during the grant application process then be assured we will have told them about these new arrangements.

Contact details for these organisations:

- Radius Housing's Staying Put Team: 033 0123 0888

- Gable: 028 7188 2147 or E: gable@shelterni.org