

A Guide to Small Works Assistance

What is Small Works Assistance?

Small Works Assistance is a discretionary form of assistance which the Council makes available under Enfield's Housing Assistance Policy for the Private Sector. The maximum amount available is £3000.00. The amount of assistance provided is registered as a charge against the property and has to be repaid to the Council when the property is sold in the future or a change of ownership is registered for the property. No interest is applied to the sum to be repaid.

What can Small Works Assistance be used for?

Small Works Assistance is available for works to remedy specific and relatively minor items of disrepair which are likely to affect the Health & Welfare of the occupants of the property. The scheme is usually restricted to the following single items of repair:

- Repairs to maintain existing heating and hot water to the premises - for example: boiler repair or replacement.
- Repairs to replace dangerous electrical wiring installations.
- Repairs to prevent dampness penetrating into the property – for example: repairs to badly leaking roofs or defective damp proofing courses.

Other items of disrepair which are likely to be detrimental to the Health & Welfare of the occupants may be considered for small works assistance in exceptional circumstances.

However, the scheme does not usually cover the repair of other single building elements that have failed or broken down, such as replacement of defective shower units, repair/renewal of windows or replacement of cracked toilets and baths. It also does not include decorating a property or repairs to a conservatory/lean-to or porch.

Continued overleaf



If extensive repairs are required to the property and the costs are likely to substantially exceed the £3000.00 limit, Small Works Assistance will not be available. In these circumstances you may wish to consider an equity loan scheme called Houseproud or consult a High Street lender to find alternative ways of paying for the repairs.

Who can apply for Small Works Assistance?

To qualify for Small Works Assistance the household must contain one of the following:

- be aged 60 years or over or,
- be suffering from long term illness or,
- have dependent children aged 16 years or younger.

The applicant must also:

- be the owner and occupier of the property and,
- have owned the property for a minimum of 3 years and,
- be part of a household that is on “low income”. A means test will be carried out to determine the level of income. If the property is jointly owned, all owners will be means tested.

How do I apply for Small Works Assistance?

Should you feel that you may qualify for Small Works Assistance or would like more information about this scheme or Houseproud loans or Disabled Facilities Grants please contact the Technical Support Team, Private Sector Housing Assistance, on 020 8379 1000.

If it is considered that the proposed works are appropriate, and that the applicant is likely to be eligible for Small Works Assistance, you will be sent a means test form to complete and return. If the means test confirms low income, a surveyor will arrange to visit you to inspect your property and will draw up a schedule of works. You will then be required to obtain two written estimates for the proposed works, as detailed in the schedule. In some circumstances you may also need to obtain specialist reports to confirm that the works are necessary, e.g. from a qualified electrician. You will be provided with an application form which you will submit with your estimates. You will not normally get any assistance if you start works before the Council approve the application.

If you have problems finding suitable contractors to carry out the works, we can send you a copy of a list of builders who have joined the Council’s Building Confidence scheme – telephone Private Sector Housing, on 020 8379 1000.

Getting the work done:

When your application has been assessed, you will be sent a letter confirming that Small Works Assistance has been approved. You will be advised of the amount of assistance. In some circumstances applicants may have to pay some of the costs of the works themselves. The approval letter will give details of any such payments.

You can then contact the contractor who provided the estimate upon which the approval is based and instruct them to go ahead with the works.

Some building repair/replacement works require approval under the Building Regulations. A separate application will have to be made for such works and there is likely to be a fee for making this application. Your contractor should be able to advise you on this matter.

If you are in any doubt, contact Building Control Services on 020 8379 1000.

When works are complete

Upon completion of works you will submit a claim for payment together with invoices and any necessary supporting certificates, such as a GAS Safe certificate, electrical safety certificate, Building Control completion certificate and any accompanying guarantees. A charge will be put on the property, which remains on the Local Landcharge Register until you sell the property or a change of ownership occurs. The charge is removed when the amount of Small Works Assistance provided is repaid to the Council. There is no interest charged.

The Council will pay the approved amount of Small Works Assistance directly to the contractor unless the applicant has already paid the contractor and provides a receipt to confirm that payment.

Further information

For any further information about Small Works Assistance, Houseproud loans or Disabled Facilities Grants please contact Enfield Council's Private Sector Housing Services.

Private Sector Housing
020 8379 1000
Email: grant.admin@enfield.gov.uk

The Enfield Council website has more information and advice:
www.enfield.gov.uk

Call Enfield Council's
Customer Service Team on
020 8379 1000

