

# Grants for landlords

Grants are available from Islington Council to all landlords for improvement of energy efficiency and security. Some owners of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are eligible for grants for improving fire protection and providing extra kitchen and bathroom facilities.

## Energy efficiency and security grants

Grants for energy efficiency and security measures are available to all private landlords under the PLEASE scheme (Private Landlords Energy Award Scheme). A grant will be available amounting to 67% of the cost of installing measures to meet the energy efficiency and security standard (see last page). A loan from HelpCo is available for the remaining 33% of the cost of energy efficiency works, application forms are available from residential support services (see page 3).

## House in multiple occupation grants

### Which properties are eligible for a grant?

HMO grants are available for improvements, which are required by the environmental health service, as part of the proactive programme for improving HMOs.

The property must have planning permission for use as an HMO.

To be eligible for a grant, the property must have been in the same ownership for two years and must have been built or converted more than ten years ago.

Grants are not available where HMOs are to be converted to self-contained flats.

All HMOs which are licensable under the new Housing Act 2004, will be eligible for a grant.

This part of the Act will be implemented in April 2006 and it will apply to HMOs of three or more storeys, occupied by five or more people.

**Please note:** You should not assume that you will get a grant until you have received written approval. All grants are subject to the availability of funding.

### How much grant will be paid?

The environmental health officer or technical officer will send you a schedule of works required to meet the minimum legal standards for HMO. Grant aid will be paid for fire protection works and the provision of additional kitchen and bathroom facilities.

The maximum grant will be £20,000 for each HMO. The reasonable cost for the work required will be calculated by the council.

Grant aid will not be available for repair or maintenance of the property, or items within the property. Only additional sets of kitchen and bathroom facilities are eligible for grant aid (repairs or additions to existing kitchens and bathrooms are not eligible).

### What is the procedure?

A full application includes a builder's estimate for the works, proof of planning permission or a certificate of lawful use and other documents as stated on the form. Once received, the council will approve (or refuse) your application and inform you of the amount of grant available, within five weeks.



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The builder who estimated for the works on application, must carry out the works. If you need to change your builder please contact residential support services. Interim payments are only available in exceptional circumstances.

You must ensure that all works are completed and the grant claimed (including provision of certificates and guarantees) within six months of approval or within the date of expiry of any statutory notice, otherwise your grant may be withdrawn.

On completion of the works an inspection will be carried out to ensure all works have been satisfactorily completed. Although the council officer will check the works for grant purposes, it is important that you, as the owner of the property, are satisfied. If not, you must discuss your concerns with your builder or agent.

Final payment is paid subject to receipt of certificates and guarantees e.g., for any fire alarm or from the council's building control officer.

We advise you to employ an architect or surveyor to assist you in the process. Lists of architects and surveyors can be obtained from residential support services. Resident landlords, who are over 60 or disabled, can get such assistance from St Pancras and Humanist Housing Association, Care and Repair (see overleaf).

### **What conditions apply to the grant?**

A certificate of availability for letting will be required prior to approval of any grant, stating that the current owner will let all rooms in the HMO for three years from the final grant payment.

On completion of works and before payment of the grant:

- The schedule(s) of work sent to you by the environmental health officer or technical officer must have been carried out to make the HMO fit for human habitation and fit for the number of occupants
- The HMO must meet the Energy Efficiency and Security Standard (see overleaf)
- The owner and agent, if any, must sign up to the Islington Landlords Promise, which sets out standards for management of the letting; copies will be sent to all tenants
- A copy of the current building insurance certificate to be sent with claim for payment of grant
- The landlord must be accredited with the London Landlords' Accreditation scheme within six months following completion of the works

During the three years following the final grant payment:

- The HMO must be covered by building insurance
- Certificates for safety of gas installations and for the automatic fire detection system to be sent to the residential support services annually

### **Grants for single occupied premises**

Where an unfit flat or house is occupied on regulated tenancy and the tenant pays a controlled rent, set by the rent officer, a grant will be available. The grant will be 50% of the reasonable cost of the works to make the property fit for human habitation up to a maximum of £5,000. The dwelling must have been in the same ownership for two years. The dwelling must meet the Decent Homes Standard on completion and the conditions and procedure described above will apply.

## **Exceptional cases**

If you are not eligible for a grant under this grants policy and you feel you should be, you can apply for consideration of exceptional need for a grant. Criteria have been specified for such considerations, please ask residential support services for a list of criteria for exceptions to the policy.

## **Contacts**

Grants administration is dealt with by:

### **Residential Support Services**

Islington Council  
159 Upper Street  
London N1 1RE  
Email: residential.envh@islington.gov.uk  
Tel: 020 7527 3104

If you are a resident landlord and are over 60 or disabled, you can get assistance from:

### **Care and Repair Team**

St Pancras and Humanist Housing Association  
8 Norah Levington Court,  
Randolph Street,  
London NW1 0TS  
Email: care.repair@sph.org  
Tel: 020 7284 5473

For information on energy efficiency and discounts on condensing boilers, contact:

### **The Energy Centre**

Islington Council  
159 Upper Street  
London N1 1RE  
Email: energy.advice@islington.gov.uk  
Tel: 0800 953 1221

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND SECURITY STANDARD

**Central Heating** – Dwelling to have gas central heating with a programmer, room thermostat and thermostats on all radiators. Where a new boiler is installed, it should be a condensing boiler (discounts may be available, contact the Energy Centre below). Consideration should be given to replacement of any boiler over fifteen years old.

There is now a legal requirement in building regulations as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 to install gas condensing boilers for all new gas boiler installations. However it may be difficult to ensure an adequate flow rate in HMOs with more than three occupiers. Landlords will therefore need to either install a large combination condensing boiler or supplement the boiler with a mains pressure hot water storage unit or similar.

Examples of models of these options are either a “*Potterton*” *Powermax* condensing boiler with an integrated hot water mains pressure hot water storage. This normally takes a foot print of 600m x 600m and will be 120mm high (about the size and shape of a washing machine). Alternatively a condensing boiler can be supplemented with a “*Mega flow*” mains pressure hot water storage installation or similar. N.B. Information about products given above does not amount to a recommendation by the council.

**Insulation** to be provided to all lofts or flat roofs any cavity walls and to any hot- water tank; level of insulation to be to the Building Regulation Standard. Where roof covering is replaced, insulation to be installed to the Building Regulation Standard.

**Windows** – Any replacement windows, except wooden double-hung sash windows, which are replaced, are to be double glazed and all windows and external doors to be draught stripped. (Please note that building control approval is needed and planning permission will probably be needed for replacement of windows, unless replacement is identical to existing.)

Windows on the ground floor, or accessible from the ground, or a flat roof or a wall, need to have key-operated locks. Where possible, they are to be lockable in a slightly open position to allowing ventilation. Any louvre windows in accessible locations, to be replaced.

**Front entrance doors** (including internal entrance doors to flats) to have a rim automatic deadlock and a cowl to the letterbox. Any rotten doors are to be replaced. In addition a hand operated five lever mortice dead lock should be fitted and be suitably located so it cannot be easily operated by any potential intruder breaking another part of the door. For example, do not install the mortice lock within an arms distance from any glass transom, window vane or letter box or similar weak point of the door or dwelling.

**Smoke Alarms** – all dwellings to contain a minimum of one smoke alarm per floor connected to the mains electricity supply.