

do
Press Notice

510

Wk
3/12 30 December 1981*Harry*
CHANGES IN THE HOME INSULATION SCHEME AND IN
HOME IMPROVEMENT GRANTS TO HELP THE DISABLED
COME INTO EFFECT

In a statement issued today, John Stanley, Minister for Housing and Construction said:

"I want to draw the attention of disabled people to the fact that significant changes to both the Home Insulation Scheme and to home improvement grants to help the disabled will come into effect on 31 December 1981 and 1 January 1982 respectively.

"From the 31 December, the severely disabled, as well as the elderly on low incomes, are eligible for a 90 per cent rate of grant for home insulation. The 90 per cent rate of grant will be available to all disabled people who are in receipt of supplementary allowance, rent rebate or allowance, or rate rebate, and they, or one of their dependants living with them, must be receiving mobility allowance, attendance allowance or constant attendance allowance.

"In addition from 1 January 1982, disabled people who need to adapt their homes will be able to get higher home improvement grants to help with the cost. They will now be eligible for grant of up to 75 per cent of the cost of the work, or for a grant of up to 90 per cent in cases of hardship. Local authorities must give a grant towards the cost of installing an extra bathroom or WC if a disabled person cannot easily use the existing one, and they may also help with other adaptations costing up to £8,500 outside Greater London or costing up to £11,500 in Greater London."

NOTE TO EDITORS

Plans to change the Homes Insulation Scheme and home improvement grant system to provide more help for the disabled were originally outlined by John Stanley, Minister for Housing and Construction, on 23 October 1981. (See DOE press notices 397/81 and 472/81).

Home Insulation Scheme

The Home Insulation Scheme was set up under the Homes Insulation Act 1978. Under the scheme, householders with uninsulated lofts can obtain grants towards the cost of insulating their loft, all pipes and water tanks in the loft, and their hot water tanks. From August 1980, 90 per cent grants (up to a maximum of £90) have been available under the scheme for the elderly on low incomes (that is men over 65 or women over 60 who are in receipt of supplementary pensions, rent rebate, rent allowance or rate rebate). For anyone else the grant rate has been 66 per cent up to a maximum of £65.

From 31 December 1981 people also qualify for the 90 per cent rate of grant if they are in receipt of supplementary allowance, rent rebate, rent allowance or rate rebate and they or one of their dependants are in receipt of mobility allowance, attendance allowance or constant attendance allowance. Dependants include the applicant's wife or husband (or anyone living with the applicant as husband or wife), and children under 16 or over that age but in full time education.

Home Improvement Grants

From 1 January 1982 disabled people will be treated as priority cases and will be able to obtain larger home improvement grants for adaptations needed to enable them to remain in their homes. They will then be able to get grants covering up to 75 per cent of the cost of the necessary works - or up to 90 per cent in cases of hardship. And the maximum cost of work which can be aided by improvement grant will go up to £11,500 in Greater London and £8,500 elsewhere.

Local authorities can pay home improvement grants towards the cost of making houses suitable for disabled people. Mandatory intermediate grants are available for putting in extra standard amenities (eg a downstairs WC or bathroom) if the existing ones are inaccessible to a disabled occupant. Discretionary improvement grants are available for other work which may be needed, ranging from major adaptations like extending the ground floor, putting in a lift or adapting the kitchen to more minor work like enlarging doors or windows, moving electric sockets or changing taps.

Since December 1980, local authorities have been able to pay home improvement grants at different rates:

- 75 per cent (or 90 per cent in cases of hardship) for seriously substandard houses;
- 50 per cent (or 65 per cent in cases of hardship) for other cases.

Work to adapt houses for disabled people has until now qualified for grant at the lower rate, but such work will now be included among the priority cases which qualify for the higher rate of grant.

Similarly, since December 1980 there have been two levels of eligible expense limits for improvement grants:

- £8,500 (or £11,500 in Greater London) for seriously substandard houses;
- £5,500 (or £7,500 in Greater London) for other cases.

The higher eligible expense limits will now also apply to work for disabled people.

Press Inquiries: 01-212 3492/3493/3494/3495/
3496/3497

Night Calls (6.30 pm - 8.00 am)

Weekends and Holidays: 01-212 7071

Public Inquiries: 01-212 3434; ask for
Public Inquiry Unit