

15 April 2024

Our Ref: FOI 350

Request

Following your email received on 20 March 2024 for information you sent a further email [09 April 2024] to clarify the information you requested.

You requested the following information:

I would like to obtain the following information regarding discretionary grants paid out by the Housing Executive during the specified years, in particular Home Repair Assistant grants:

- 1. The number of discretionary grants paid out in the following years: 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and since the executive was reformed in February 2024.*
- 2. Additionally, I would like to know how many of these grants were paid out to applicants who fell under exceptional circumstances criteria for each year mentioned above.*

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Our response

The Housing Executive administers three types of discretionary grants on behalf of the Department of Communities. They are:

- Renovation Grant
- Replacement Grant
- Home Repair Assistant Grant

Discretionary grants are only available in exceptional circumstances and are subject to funding being available from the Department for Communities. Discretionary grants have faced budget restrictions across the last three financial years and the Housing Executive has only received an allocation which allowed it to cover previously committed spend and those directly linked to the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant.

The table below is a breakdown of the total number of discretionary grants completed in the last five financial years. All of these grant applicants met the exceptional circumstances criteria, as this must be met to receive a grant award. The final column reflects the number completed since the NI Executive was reformed in Feb 2024:

Discretionary Grant Type	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	2023/ 2024	03 Feb – 31 Mar 24
Renovation	12	85	87	84	42	3
Replacement	2	3	5	5	2	1
Home Repair Assistance	78	60	56	45	16	1
Total	200	148	148	134	60	5

It should be noted that during the lifetime of a discretionary grant there may be a substantial gap from approval to completion (final invoice payment) which may cross financial years and is outside the Housing Executive's control.

This concludes our response.