



UPPER FLOOR CONVERSION SCHEME

Have you considered using vacant upper floor space in your premises as residential accommodation?

Worcester City Council could help you with the cost of conversion works

What is the Upper Floor Conversion Grant (UFCG) scheme?

The scheme is an initiative from Worcester City Council to convert vacant space above commercial premises in conservation areas of the city into residential accommodation. This has the dual benefit of providing much needed homes, as well as helping to regenerate these conservation areas.

The benefit to you is the re-occupation of currently unused space and the additional rental income that this will generate.

How does the scheme work?

When you apply for a UFCG, an Officer from the council will visit your premises to carry out an inspection of the space you are proposing to convert. If it is considered suitable for the provision of residential accommodation, the Officer will make a number of recommendations regarding what works are required in terms of housing standards and conservation requirements.

The Council will offer a grant of 50% of the cost of the works, up to a maximum of £7,500. An Officer of the Council will inspect the property again once the work has been completed to ensure it is suitable for occupation.

Once the property is ready for occupation, the Council will assist you to find a suitable tenant, through either the *Council's Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme* or the *Home Choice Plus Housing Register*. We have a dedicated Officer who will assist you through every stage of the process, working closely with you to let the property and offering expert advice on landlord tenancy law.

What does the UFCG cover?

These are available to carry out works of repair, improvement and adaption to provide new units of self contained housing accommodation, although not bedsits, for rent by conversion of vacant spaces above commercial premises in conservation areas across the city. It may be possible to link the UFCG with the *Empty Homes Grant* where an owner is looking at converting an empty commercial building into properties available for rent.

Eligible Applicants

UFCG are only available for properties in area/s of Lowesmoor, Sidbury, St. Johns and the Historic City as designated by the City Council. They will also have regard to



the best value for local authorities, i.e. number of separate units per scheme in date order of application.

Qualifying Criteria

The grant funding will only be available for essential works as deemed appropriate by the council, to enable the property to become habitable.

The landlord will be required to sign a *Fit and Proper Landlords Declaration* to ensure that the owner is a suitable person to be a landlord (or their managing agent if applicable).

The UFCG is a discretionary grant and subject to available resources.

Grants are available on a first come, first serve basis.

Conditions

Owners will be expected to make their property available to Worcester City Council's deposit Bond Scheme for a minimum of 3 years and must meet all regulations laid down by this scheme. The landlord must advise us when the tenant vacates and allows us the opportunity of replacing the tenant.

The owner must give a signed undertaking that the property will be available for rent for further two years. There may be exceptional circumstances where the property is exempt from these conditions and will be agreed by the Council prior to grant approval.

If one or all the units is disposed within 5 years, and the disposal is not an 'exempt' disposal, the grant will be need to repaid back.

How do I find out more?

If you are interested in applying for an Upper Floor Conversion Grant, please contact Barbara Sarbinowska, Private housing & Standard Team leader on 01905 722257 to discuss the scheme in more detail.

- For Conservation Enquiries contact: Cristina Gardiner on 01905 722525
- For Housing Standard Enquiries contact: Chris Chapman on 01905 722273
- For Housing Letting Enquiries contact: Amy Crush on 01905 722280

