

Overview of Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme

General

- The '*Financial Assistance Scheme for Remediation of Damaged Dwellings due to the Use of Defective Concrete Blocks*' (known as the '*grant scheme*'), is available to financially assist homeowner(s) to remediate their dwelling, where their dwelling has been damaged by the use of defective concrete blocks in its construction.
- The grant scheme is a scheme of last resort for affected homeowners who have no other practical options to remediate their dwellings.
- The grant scheme will be operated and administered by Mayo and Donegal County Councils respectively.

Who does the scheme apply to?

- This scheme applies to the **owners** of **dwellings** (located in Donegal or Mayo) which are damaged due to defective concrete blocks containing excessive amounts of deleterious materials namely mica or pyrite.
- The **dwelling** must be the individual's principal private residence.
- Under this grant scheme an **owner** can only apply for one **dwelling** and a **dwelling** can only be the subject of one grant. (***One owner, one dwelling – one dwelling, one grant***)

How do I know I have damage?

- An engineers report in accordance with IS 465:2018 is required to demonstrate that your dwelling has been damaged. This report must be carried out by an engineer who has the necessary professional experience and specialist training to provide this report, a list of these engineers can be found at: <https://www.engineersireland.ie/services/i-s-465-2018-register.aspx>

- In June 2019, Engineers Ireland established a register of competent engineers for homeowners/affected parties' reference. The register lists Chartered Engineers, who have the necessary direct professional experience, competence and specialist training in accordance with the requirements set out in 'I.S. 465:2018 - Assessment, testing and categorisation of damaged buildings incorporating concrete blocks containing certain deleterious materials'.

What is IS 465:2018?

- The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) established a Technical Committee to scope and fast track the development of a standardised protocol.
- The standardised protocol informs the course of action in relation to remedial works for all affected householders. The standardised protocol was published by the NSAI on 13 November 2018 and 'I.S. 465:2018 - Assessment, testing and categorisation of damaged buildings incorporating concrete blocks containing certain deleterious materials', is available at www.n Sai.ie.
- The standard can be used to assess and categorise the damage in properties where the concrete blocks are suspected to contain the minerals mica or pyrite. Previously, there was no common way for engineers or homeowners to assess the damage caused by defective concrete blocks, in order to decide what, if any, remedial work could be carried out. The standard:
 - establishes a protocol for assessing and determining whether a building has been damaged by concrete blocks containing certain excessive amounts of deleterious materials (free or unbound muscovite mica, or aggregate with potentially deleterious quantities of pyrite);
 - describes methods for establishing the extent of the problem;
 - describes the scope of any testing required; and
 - categorises buildings, in accordance with the standard, providing competent persons with guidance on the appropriate measures to be taken.

What costs are covered by this scheme?

- This scheme covers up to 90% of the costs associated with the remediation of the dwelling including:
 - Engineer's report (including final report in accordance with I.S. 465)
 - Preparation of remedial works plan by a competent engineer
 - Costs associated with a contractor carrying out the remedial works
 - Professional oversight of the remedial works, including inspection and certification.

What grant amount is available?

- Where remedial works are deemed necessary, the local authority may approve a grant up to 90% of the costs (subject to maximum limits).
- The maximum approved cost is dependent on the remedial option, as recommended in the engineer's report (See Table below).

Remedial Option	Remedial Works Description	Maximum Approved Cost (including VAT)
Option 1	Demolish entire dwelling to foundation level and rebuild.	€275,000
Option 2	Demolish and rebuild external walls (both outer and inner leafs) down to foundation on a phased basis and re-render.	€220,000
Option 3	Demolish and rebuild external walls (both outer and internal leafs) down to top of rising wall on a phased basis and re-render.	€210,000
Option 4	Demolish and rebuild external walls (outer leaf only) down to top of rising wall on a phased basis and re-render.	€75,000
Option 5	Demolish and rebuild outer leaf of affected walls only and re-render.	€55,000

- As the remedial works progress, the homeowner will be eligible to apply for grant payments.

When will the scheme begin accepting applications?

- This scheme will be operated and administered by Donegal County Council and Mayo County Council who are available to advise on the timeframe for roll out of scheme in their respective areas.

Process for Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme

Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility

- Homeowner applies to local authority providing an engineer's report as evidence of damage to dwelling.
- Local authority confirms eligibility to proceed to Stage 2, subject to the terms of the scheme.

Stage 2: Grant Approval

- Before works commence, the homeowner applies for grant approval, providing estimated costs to remediate the dwelling.
- Local authority confirms the maximum approved grant amount, subject to the terms of the scheme.

Stage 3: Payment of Grant

- Following completion and certification of works, homeowner applies for full or partial payment of grant approved at Stage 2.
- Local authority pays grant to homeowner, subject to the terms of the scheme.