

## **ADAPTATIONS TO YOUR HOME**

Adaptations to homes are carried out to enable people who have disabilities, or who are infirm, to remain and live comfortably in their own home. Typical adaptations would be the fitting of extra handrails on stairs, building a ramp to allow a level entrance to your home, or making the bathroom more accessible.

### **How do I go about getting my home adapted?**

If you think that you need to make an adaptation to your home to make it easier for you to manage you should contact the Social Services Office who will arrange a suitable time to visit you at home and make an initial assessment of your needs.

They may be able to resolve your problem simply, perhaps with a minor adaptation such as installing a grab-rail, carried out by the Council's Technical Services Department. If a major adaptation is needed, a Social Services Occupational Therapist will need to carry out a full assessment, which may identify risks to your health if the changes were not made. An Occupational Therapist is a specialist who assesses the need for housing adaptations and daily living equipment. Social Services will arrange an appointment for you.

Social Services will then inform you which adaptations they agree are necessary and appropriate by letter.

The help available to you depends upon:

- your individually assessed needs
- the type of property you live in, and whether it can be adapted.

### **How will the adaptations be paid for?**

Social Services can arrange for some adaptations, for example internal handrails, to be done directly by their Technical Services Department. For other more costly adaptations to your home, you may be referred for a Disabled Facilities Grant to help with some, or all, of the cost.

- If you are a Council tenant you may be asked to make a contribution towards the cost of an adaptation, depending on the size of the adaptation and resource constraints of the Council.
- If you are an owner occupier or private tenant any contribution will depend upon a means test undertaken by the Finance Department of the Council.
- If you are Housing Association tenant, any aids and adaptations are normally dealt with by the Housing Association direct.

Fees for professional services, including architects, structural engineers, planning officers and so on, are normally covered within the grant. If however, charges are incurred and the grant is *not* subsequently approved, the individual will be responsible for these fees.

### **What is the maximum grant I could apply for?**

A Disabled Facilities Grant will cover expenses of up to £25,000, but only for work which is assessed as necessary, appropriate, reasonable and practicable, based on the type of work specified in the legislation.

This amount is a maximum, not an entitlement, and is based on a means test.

### **What is a Disabled Facilities Grant for?**

- To make it easier to get into and out of your dwelling (eg installing ramps)
- Ensuring the safety of the disabled person and other occupants (eg providing a specially adapted room in which it would be safe to leave a disabled person unattended or improved lighting to ensure better visibility)
- To make access easier to the living room
- By providing or improving access to the bedroom, kitchen, toilet, washbasin and bath (or shower) facilities
- To improve or provide a heating system in your home which is suitable to the needs of the disabled person
- To adapt heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use

### **What happens if it is not possible to make the adaptation that I need?**

Occasionally it is not possible to make satisfactory adaptations to a person's home, and this can be for many reasons. However, Social Services may be able to offer advice and find other solutions. Sometimes this may involve helping the person find alternative accommodation.

For more information, contact the Social Services Office on telephone 01720 422148.