

Oxfordshire County Council Social & Community Services

**Occupational Therapy Service**

**Guide to home adaptations  
for disabled people**

**This booklet is intended to assist you if you are considering  
adapting your home**

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## **Adaptations to your home**

### **What help is available towards adapting my home?**

- If you are permanently and substantially disabled you may be eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), or other types of grant to adapt your home. This is explained more fully in the Department of Environment leaflet Housing, Key Facts, Disabled Facilities Grants, a copy of which is available on request from your local council. See page 10 for addresses.
- The grant (DFG) is administered by your local district or city council and is subject to a financial assessment by them. This means you may have to pay something towards the cost of the work.
- If you rent your property from the council or a housing association they may directly fund work to adapt your home. If not you can still apply for a DFG.
- Councils can award DFGs for approved works up to a maximum of £30,000.
- If there is a shortfall in the amount of grant available you may get additional financial help from your local authority Social & Community Services department. For most adaptations this help is not available to council or housing association tenants. This is also subject to a financial assessment.

### **How does the Disabled Facilities Grant Process work?**

Firstly, the city or district council normally have to consult with Social & Community Services. This consultation is likely to lead to you being offered an occupational therapy assessment.

### **What is an occupational therapy assessment?**

- An occupational therapist (OT) from Social & Community Services will visit you at home to make an assessment of your needs. She/he will ask you about your disability and may need to consult with your doctor. She/he will make an assessment of how you carry out day to day activities.
- This will include your mobility around the house and how you manage personal and domestic tasks. The needs of those who live with you or care for you will also be taken into consideration. In most cases this first assessment will take about one hour but if your needs are complex more than one visit may be required.
- Following the assessment the occupational therapist will discuss with you the options for meeting your needs. These might include advice about equipment which may solve your difficulties without alterations to your property or the option of alternative accommodation. Cost also has to be a consideration.

### **Why do I need to see an occupational therapist?**

- The occupational therapist is qualified to assess your needs related to your disability and to comment and advise on whether the work you are proposing to carry out is both necessary and appropriate to meet your needs.

### **What will the district/city council do?**

- On receiving the recommendation from the occupational therapist, an officer from the city or district council will contact you and ask you to complete a grant application form.

- This officer will carry out a financial assessment with you (they may call this a test of resources) to see if you have to make a contribution towards the cost of the adaptations. The amount you may be expected to contribute will be referred to as your notional loan.
- Under current legislation the grants officer has a duty to assess your property to make sure that the proposed alterations are reasonable and practicable. If the district council believes the adaptation scheme is not reasonable and practicable they can refuse a grant.
- The council will ask you to provide proof that you are the owner or tenant of the property. If you are not the disabled person, you need to make it clear on whose behalf you are making the application, eg. the parent of a disabled child.
- When the grants officer has all the completed paperwork, the valid application, two estimates and plans if needed – they must give you a written decision about a grant within six months.

### **Who will be financially assessed?**

- The disabled person plus his or her spouse or partner will be financially assessed.
- If the disabled person is a child there is no financial assessment.

### **What if I can't afford my assessed contribution?**

- Other sources of funding may be available. Discuss this with your occupational therapist.

### **When will I have to pay my assessed contribution (notional loan)?**

- This will vary depending on your local council. The grants officer will explain fully to you about this.

### **Can I start the work before the grant is approved?**

- You will not normally get any grant if you start the work before the council has approved your application.

### **Can I get any help with planning the work?**

- Your occupational therapist will usually be able to help you to plan minor alterations such as showers, stairlifts, ramps and minor kitchen alterations.
- If major alterations are needed, such as an extension to your property, you will need the services of an architect or surveyor. You may be able to find someone who specialises in this kind of work, discuss this with your occupational therapist or grants officer (if you get a grant their fees can be included in the cost of the works).
- It is necessary for the occupational therapist to work closely with you plus the architect/surveyor or agency and the grant officer to ensure that the plans will fully meet your needs.
- If you do not get a grant you will normally be responsible for these fees. In some situations other financial help to cover these fees might be available. In some instances architectural advice and support may be available through your local council or housing association.
- Home improvement agencies may be available in you area to help you.

### **Will I need planning permission or building regulations approval for the work?**

- You may need one or both. If an architect, surveyor or agency is working on your behalf they will be able to advise you about this. If in doubt you should contact the relevant department of your local council before starting any work.

### **How long will it take for the adaptation to be completed?**

It is a slow process but the time taken will depend partly on the complexity of the work. Please discuss the time scale with your occupational therapist or grants officer.

Some of the factors which can affect the length of time it will take to complete an adaptation are:

- Waiting for an occupational therapy assessment.
- Agreeing a solution and obtaining plans that will meet your needs.
- Obtaining the landlord's permission (if appropriate).
- Providing proof of the ownership of the property (proof of title).
- Existing structural faults which need rectifying.
- Obtaining planning permission.
- Obtaining estimates.
- Availability of funding.
- Availability of builders.
- Obtaining final grant approval the council must agree or refuse a grant within six months after receiving your valid application.
- If approved full payment has to be made by the council within a year from the date of your formal application.

### **Will the work be checked?**

- While work is in progress the council should make sure that it is monitored.
- When the works are finished the occupational therapist and grants officer will want to check with you that the works have been carried out as agreed in the plans.

### **What about maintenance and repair costs?**

- Once the work is completed you will not normally get financial help from the council or Social & Community Services with the maintenance and repair of the adaptations, fixtures or fittings. If you live in rented accommodation you should check with your landlord.
- You should check the guarantee period available to you. It is advisable to inform your household insurance company of works you have had carried out so they may upgrade your insurance accordingly.
- The county council currently offers a servicing and maintenance agreement for lifts. Please ask your occupational therapist about this.

## **Useful addresses and contacts checklist**

**For your convenience listed below are details you may wish to put names and contact numbers against for future reference:**

Local Social & Community Services Office:

Occupational Therapist:

Council Office:

Council Officer:

Housing Department:

Housing Association:

Architect:

Builder:

Home Improvement Agency:

Others:

## **Guideposts Trust Independent Living Centre**

Northfield Farm Lane

Madley Park

Witney

Oxon OX28 1UD

Tel: 01993 899980 Fax: 01993 700841

[www.guidepoststrust.org.uk](http://www.guidepoststrust.org.uk)

## **For more information please contact:**

Access Team, Oxfordshire County Council, PO Box 780, Oxford OX1 9GX

Telephone **0845 050 7666**

Email: [access@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:access@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **District council contact details**

### **Cherwell District Council**

Bodicote House

Bodicote

Banbury

OX15 4AA

01295 252535

Website: <http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/>

### **West Oxfordshire District Council**

Woodgreen

Witney

Oxon

OX28 1NB

01993 861000

Website: <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/>

### **Oxford City Council 24/7**

PO Box 10

Oxford

OX1 1EN

01865 249811

Website: <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/>

**Vale of the White Horse District Council**

Abbey House

Abbey Close

Abingdon

OX14 3JE

01235 520202

Website: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/>

**South Oxfordshire District Council**

Benson Lane

Crowmarsh Gifford

Wallingford

Oxon

OX10 8ED

01491 823000

Website: <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/>

## Help with translations

Alternative formats of this publication can be made available on request from the Access Team – see page 9 .

“Formate alternative te ketij publikimi ofrohen me kerkese. Kjo perfshin dhe gjuhe te tjera, me shkronja te medhaja, shkronja per te verberit, kasete degjimi, disk kompjuteri ose email.”

Albanian

আপনি যদি অনুরোধ করেন তাহলে এই পুস্তিকাটি বিকল্প ছাঁদে, যেমন, অন্য কোনও ভাষায়, বড় হরফে, ব্রেইলে, অডিও-ক্যাসেটে, কমপিউটারের ডিস্কে বা ইমেলের মাধ্যমে পেতে পারেন।

Bengali

“本刊物備有其他的格式可供索取。這些包括有其他語言版，大字版，盲人用版，錄音帶版，電腦磁碟版或電子郵件版。”

Chinese

प्रार्थना करने पर यह प्रकाशन दूसरे रूपों में प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। जिस में सम्मिलित है, दूसरी भाषाओं में, बड़े छापे में, ब्रेअल, सुनने की टेप पर, कम्प्यूटर की डिस्क पर या ई-मेल द्वारा।

Hindi

“ਸਿਹ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਛਾਪੇ ਤੇ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਵਿਚ, ਸੁਣਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਟੇਪ ਤੇ, ਕੰਪਿਊਟਰ ਡਿਸਕ ਜਾਂ ਈ ਮੇਲ ਤੇ।”

Punjabi

“اس اشاعت کو متبادل اشکال میں درخواست کرنے پر حاصل کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ اس میں دوسری زبانیں، براہرٹ، بریل (جسے اندھے چھو کر پڑھ سکیں)، آڈیو کیسٹ، کمپیوٹر ڈسک یا ای میل شامل ہیں۔”

Urdu