

Funding Adaptations to the home

*A guide for
homeowners*



**This Guide details the
financial help that may be
available to make changes
to your home to make it
easier to get around**

Is this leaflet for you?

- Do you **own** your home?
- Are you, or a member of your household disabled, or have problems getting around?
- Does your home need changed so that it meets your needs? Or the needs of someone else in your household?
- Are the changes needed essential?
- Do you need help paying for the work?

If you answer **'yes'** to any of these questions then you may be able to get help in paying for this work.

Everyone can get information and advice about their mobility problems. Your local Social Work Services will look at the difficulties you are facing and tell you about any help available to you.

But be aware!



Local authorities have their own local policies on the assistance they provide, so the help available will vary depending on where you live.



Do you rent your home from the Council, a housing association, or privately? You can also get help. But the arrangements are different. Ask for the leaflet which applies to you or go to www.scotland.gov.uk.

What does this leaflet cover?

The financial help described in this leaflet is only available to pay for significant changes to the structure of your home.

There are different arrangements for getting help with other smaller changes, such as fitting grab rails.

There are also different arrangements for getting help with equipment, such as a shower chair. Your local social work department will be able to explain more about these options when you are assessed.

JARGON EXPLAINED

Housing Adaptation

Involves permanent structural changes to your home e.g.:

- Widening doors and fitting a ramp for wheelchair access
- Replacing the bath with a shower
- Fitting lower work surfaces to make the kitchen easier to use

Your local Social Work Services will advise on the full range of adaptations they fund.

But be aware!



If your case is assessed as a low priority you may have to wait some time for assistance.

Limited budgets may also delay the provision of any grant.

The work must be essential

The work to your home must be **essential**. In other words, you must need to have the work done to make your home accessible for you, or someone in your household.

There is no set list of the type of work which is essential. But it will always include:

- ✓ Fitting 'standard amenities', such as a bathroom or toilet.
- ✓ Changing these 'standard amenities', where this is needed so that you, or someone in your household, can use them.
- ✓ Other essential changes to the structure of your home so that it meets your needs.

- ✚ Your local authority Social Work Services will decide, following an assessment of your needs, whether the changes needed to your home meet the conditions for essential work.
- ✚ The assessment will usually be carried out by an Occupational Therapist, and will identify what you need help with and suggest possible ways of meeting your needs, including adaptations to your home.
- ✚ The assessment will also consider how urgently you need a grant.

What help is available?

A grant will only be paid for work which your local authority has decided is essential.

Your local authority must give you a grant for any changes that they deem essential. This is called 'mandatory grant'. The rules about mandatory grants apply to all Councils.

There are two different levels of mandatory grant.

- Everyone will get **80%** of the costs of work covered by mandatory grant.
- Some people will get **100%** of the costs covered by grant.

If you receive any of the following benefits, you will get **100% grant**, meeting all of the costs of the work.

- ✓ Income Support
- ✓ Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance
- ✓ Pension Credit (guarantee element)
- ✓ Income Related employment and Support Allowance

For other people who do not receive these benefits, grant of 80% will be paid. This amount does not depend on your income. Your local authority will then advise you about ways to pay for the rest of the cost of the work. You may also wish to get independent financial advice.

Extra financial help from your local authority

Some local authorities will 'top up' the 80% grant to meet more of the costs of the work. This usually depends on your income and it will be means tested.

You can ask your local authority to explain their rules for any extra grant and whether you qualify.

The cost of the work

There is no upper limit to the cost of the work, or for the amount of grant which can be given. But your local authority will check that the cost of the work is reasonable.

Moving to a more suitable property

Occasionally it may not be possible to adapt your current home to meet your needs. This can happen for reasons such as:

- There is not enough space to make the necessary changes
- The way your house is built may make it very difficult or impossible to change

In some situations other options may be suggested.

Occasionally, your local authority may suggest that you think about moving to a different property. Very occasionally, help may be available to pay for the cost of buying, or even building, another more suitable home.

What to do next?

- ✓ Contact your local authority Social Work Services if you think you need a major adaptation. You should do this even if you do not want to apply for a grant.
- ✓ They will arrange for your needs to be assessed. This is usually done by an Occupational Therapist and will look at the difficulties you are facing in your home and suggest ways to help you.
- ✓ You must have an assessment if you want to apply for financial help. You will only receive a grant if the assessment concludes that a major adaptation is essential

Getting more information

This leaflet is a brief summary of the rules on grant funding for a major adaptation. More detailed information can be found in your local authority's Scheme of Assistance.

The Scheme of Assistance will set out what your local authority considers to be **essential works** and all of the ways that it will help people living in the private sector.

Need some extra support?

If you feel that you might need some independent support to take you through this process you can ask for the help of an advocate.

Advocacy services support people to represent their own interests. Where this is not possible, the advocate will represent your views.

You can get more information on Advocacy Services, and search for an advocate in your local area, on the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance's website at www.siaa.org.uk.

What if I am not happy?

If you are not happy with the decisions made about your care needs, or your eligibility you can complain to the council.

To make a complaint contact the person who last dealt with you, or the local authority's Complaints Officer. They will advise you on how to progress your complaint.

Relevant contact details will be available on your local authority's website, or by contacting your local Social Work office.

Other sources of advice

Disabled Living Foundation - www.dlf.org.uk and www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk

Living Made Easy is an impartial advice and information website about daily living equipment and other aspects of independent living developed by the Disabled Living Foundation.

Ownership Options – www.ownershipoptions.org.uk

Ownership Options helps disabled people to resolve their housing issues, by working on finding tailored solutions for individuals. They work across housing sectors, including private and social renting, however, their focus is on home ownership.

Ask Sara - www.asksara.org.uk

Ask Sara is an easy to use online self help guide that is particularly useful if you are not sure what help is available.

Care Information Scotland – Helpline 08456 001 001

www.careinfoscotland.co.uk

Care Information Scotland is a helpline and website that has been set up to provide comprehensive information on community care for older people in Scotland

Money Made Clear – www.Moneymadeclear.fsa.gov.uk or call 0300 500 5000. Money Made Clear is an independent advice service from the Financial Services Authority.

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