

Disabled Facilities Grants

Making adaptations to your home



Contents

➤	How do I find out about adapting my home?.....	3
➤	Who will advise me about adaptations?	3
➤	Does the Council have to assist with adaptations to my home?.....	4
➤	What if my needs change?	4
➤	What help is available?.....	5
➤	Applying for a grant.....	6
➤	The role of your Occupational Therapist (OT).....	7
➤	The role of a Private Sector Housing Officer (PSHO)	7
➤	Appointing an agent.....	8
➤	Completing the grant application.....	8
➤	Checking your application	9
➤	How long will my grant application take?	9
➤	If there is a funding shortfall.....	10
➤	Arranging for the work to be done	10
➤	Inspection of the works and grant payment.....	10
➤	Removal of lifts which are no longer required.....	10
➤	What if I am not happy with the service I am getting?	11

➤ **How do I find out about adapting my home?**

To speak to someone about getting advice or to make a referral for an assessment about adaptations for a **disabled adult**, please phone:

Children, Adults and Health Customer Service desk on 01454 868007

A Customer Services Officer will take details of your enquiry and talk to you about what will happen next.

If you are a parent or carer of a **disabled child**, or young person please contact:

Access and Response Team on 01454 866000 or e-mail: accessandresponse@southglos.gov.uk

➤ **Who will advise me about adaptations?**

After you have spoken to a Customer Service officer, we may send you a self-assessment form so that you can tell us about your disability and current circumstances. When we receive your completed self-assessment form, a Senior Occupational Therapist (OT) will review your information.

To decide fully whether you are eligible for assistance, an OT will make an appointment to visit you at home. The OT will assess your needs and advise you of your eligibility for equipment and/or adaptations. You can discuss your options and choices and depending on the outcome of the assessment, the OT may signpost you to other Council departments or outside agencies.

Because of the high demand for our services, you will probably have to wait for an assessment from an OT. The length of your wait will depend on your individual circumstances and how busy the service is at that time. We aim to respond as quickly as possible.

Occasionally, we may decide, after looking at the referral, that your needs can be met without further face to face assessment. In these

cases, the request can be 'fast tracked'. This is usually for minor adaptations or equipment.

➤ **Does the Council have to assist with adaptations to my home?**

An adaptation may be funded by the Council if certain conditions are met. These conditions are outlined in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. The grant for funding adaptations is called the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). An adaptation must be assessed by an Occupational Therapist (OT) as 'necessary and appropriate' to meet a disabled person's needs. An adaptation must also be needed to enable a disabled person to access certain essential facilities within their home. If you are eligible to enquire for a Disabled Facilities Grant, you will need to complete a test of financial resources or means test. This means test is also a condition of the grant. The means test is required to find out whether you are considered able to contribute towards the cost of the adaptation.

Another condition of the grant is that an adaptation must be 'reasonable and practicable'. We can refuse to fund adaptations if we believe a scheme is not 'reasonable or practicable'. This may depend on the age or condition of your home, whether the adaptation meets your safety requirements and/or whether other more cost-effective options can meet your needs. If adapting the property does not meet all your needs, or the work is not practicable, we will look at the option of a grant to help you to move to an alternative property.

➤ **What if my needs change?**

If your needs change during the time you are waiting for the OT assessment, please contact Customer Services on 01454 868007 to explain your change of circumstances. We may be able to see you more quickly, depending on how your needs have changed.

The parent or carer of a child or young person will need to talk to the Access and Response Team on **01454 866000**.

➤ **What help is available?**

Minor adaptations

If you are a disabled adult who has eligible needs, as outlined in the Care Act 2014, any minor adaptation costing £1,000 or less must be paid for by the Council. Applicants must be 18 or over and an Occupational Therapist (OT) will assess your needs and eligibility. In some circumstances a discretionary £1500 top up may fund Care Act 2014 eligible minor adaptations up to a maximum of £2500.

Some Housing Associations have their own aids and adaptation service and may help you with your needs directly. You will need to speak to your housing provider to ask them what help they can give you.



Major adaptations

If you need a major adaptation to your home, an application can be made for a Disabled Facilities Grant. The applicant must have a qualifying owner's interest or tenant's interest in the property. The applicant is not necessarily the disabled person but may make an application on behalf of the disabled person, for example the son or daughter of a disabled parent living with them, where the son or daughter is the owner of the property.

The disabled person and their partner (if applicable) will be means tested to determine how much, if anything, they will need to pay towards the cost. The means test for a DFG is generally more biased against income than capital.

Please note that this does not apply in the case of persons in receipt of Universal Credit, Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Income Based Employment & Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and Pension Guarantee Credit. In these instances,

the disabled person is automatically entitled to full grant for any eligible works.

In addition, there is no means testing where adaptations are proposed for the benefit of disabled children.

The maximum grant available by law is £30,000. The Council will consider additional discretionary funding of £10,000 in agreed cases, subject to available resources. If the cost of the work exceed £40,000 then additional finance in the form of a subsidised loan is available. However, in cases of hardship an interest-free loan may be available. Loans will usually be dependent on the applicant or disabled person holding an owner's interest in the property.

If grant funded adaptations cost more than £5,000 and enhance the value of the property, the Council may place a charge of up to £10,000 on the property for a period of 10 years. This will be assessed on a case by case basis.

➤ **Applying for a grant**

It is very important to note that you must not, under any circumstances, carry out any work to your home until you have applied for a grant and received your grant approval. If you have incurred architect's or surveyor's fees prior to approval, these can be included as part of the costs if they relate to the grant eligible scheme. You can be reimbursed at the 'grant approval stage' if you have already paid for these.

You need to check carefully whether the grant approved covers the cost of the work.

You cannot get the work done and apply retrospectively for a grant. This is not allowed by law. If you are a tenant, you will also need to get permission from your landlord before any adaptation works can be approved.

➤ **The role of your Occupational Therapist (OT)**

The Occupational Therapist (OT) will liaise with Private Sector Housing regarding what is 'necessary and appropriate' to meet your needs. You may be invited to try out equipment and adaptations by visiting our Celestine Centre, a fully adapted house in Yate. A visit can also help you to visualise what your home may look like if equipment or adaptations are installed. Please discuss arranging a visit with your OT.

The OT will give you a Grant Enquiry Form to complete. This form gives a brief outline of your housing and financial situation to the Private Sector Housing Team, who can then carry out a preliminary means test to establish how much you may be expected to contribute towards the cost of the adaptation.

The OT can still give you advice and information about adaptations whether or not you choose to apply for a grant, and whether you are eligible for a grant.

Even if you do not apply for a grant you are more than welcome to visit the Celestine Centre, our fully adapted house, where you can see and try out products and find information on adapting your home to meet your needs. To book a visit to the house please call 01454 868126 or email psehousing@southglos.gov.uk

➤ **The role of a Private Sector Housing Officer (PSHO)**

A Private Sector Housing Officer (PSHO) will visit you at home to decide whether the adaptation work proposed is reasonable and practicable.

They will also explain the grant process to you, helping you to complete your application and give you a more detailed assessment of how much, if anything, you may have to pay towards the cost of the works.

We advise everyone to apply for a grant, even if your contribution will cover the full cost of the works. This is because any contribution that you make now may be deducted from your contribution in any future application you make.

➤ **Appointing an agent**

Some people appoint an agent to help them through the process. An agent can help you to fill in the grant application, sort out additional funding and organise the building work. The costs of the agent can be met by the grant, if a grant is approved.

Your PSHO can supply you with a list of agents, but you are not obliged to choose any of them. You can use any agent of your choice, providing that they have indicated that they will act as your agent, outlined to what extent they can help you and what fees are involved. You will need to obtain two quotes from agents and the agent with the lowest quote will be funded.

➤ **Completing the grant application**

When the PSHO visits you at home they will complete the application forms and take copies of any necessary financial information, proof of your national insurance number and a current utility bill. The PSHO will assess your financial resources and will confirm whether you will get any grant, and if so, whether this will be a full or partial grant. This will normally be done electronically without the need for paper forms.

At this point you will be asked to identify three contractors you wish to quote for your works. If you are struggling to find three contractors we can provide you with a list of contractors known to us, who carry out adaptation works. Alternatively, you may find it helpful to locate contractors using the Buy with Confidence website found here:

www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk

In consultation with yourself, the OT and PSHO will agree on and produce a proposed schedule of works outlining the adaptations required to meet your needs. You will receive a copy of this schedule and the application forms. The PSHO will forward the works schedule onto your chosen contractors on your behalf. Further visits may be required by the OT and specialist equipment providers to obtain quotes.

You will then be contacted by each contractor so that they can arrange to visit you and quote for the works. The contract for the works will be between you and the contractor and NOT the Council and the contractor.

➤ **Checking your application**

The PSHO will check your application to make sure that it is complete. All quotes received will be checked to ensure that the prices submitted are fair and for the eligible works only. If the quotes are considered to be too high, they will advise you of this and give you the chance to obtain further quotes. The grant amount is approved on the lowest quote submitted, if you decide to use a contractor who is more expensive than the grant amount you will be responsible for paying any difference between the amounts.



➤ **How long will my grant application take?**

Private Sector Housing normally aims to process most applications within three months of receipt of the OT's referral, but if a case is complex, it may take longer.

Urgent cases are normally processed within a week of receipt of the OT's referral.

➤ **If there is a funding shortfall**

If there is a funding shortfall and/or you have a means tested contribution, you or your agent will need to obtain funds to cover these. You may be able to find help from charitable sources. An advocate acting on your behalf may be able to advise you.

➤ **Arranging for the work to be done**

When you have received the formal grant approval letter from Private Sector Housing, it is up to you or your agent, if you have one, to contact your contractor and organise for the work to be carried out.

➤ **Inspection of the works and grant payment**

The contract will be between you and the contractor. Whilst the Council have an interest in ensuring the work is undertaken to a good standard (and will assist where they can) this remains your responsibility. The Council will withhold payment where we are dissatisfied with the standard of workmanship. When the work is complete, the OT will check that the adaptation meets your needs and the PSHO will check that the works have been completed in line with the schedule of works.

You, or your agent, and your OT will be given a Satisfaction Form to sign and return to the PSH officer along with the contractor's invoice. You can choose for the grant to be paid to you or directly to your contractor. If you have a contribution to make towards the works you will be expected to pay this directly to the contractor before the council releases the grant funding.

➤ **Removal of lifts which are no longer required.**

Lifts (stair lifts, step lifts and through floor lifts) funded through the DFG process will belong to you. The Council will not normally remove lifts if you no longer need them. The one exception to this is for stair lifts installed by Stannah after 2014 where the Council may consider removal to enable them to be refurbished and reused.

➤ **What if I am not happy with the service I am getting?**

In the first instance you should speak with the team or service involved. Most problems can be sorted out quickly this way. You can ask a friend or relative to do this on your behalf if you wish.

For Further information about making a complaint ask for Factsheet CCH82 – “Your Feedback Counts” or you may wish to contact the Complaints and Freedom of Information Team by writing to:

Freepost RTXL-YHGY-GSYS
South Gloucestershire Council
CA&H Department- Customer feedback
Council Offices
Badminton Road
Yate
Bristol
BS37 5AF

Phone: 01454 865924

E-mail: CAHfeedback@southglos.gov.uk

A complaint can also be submitted online here: -

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints/children-adults-and-health-complaints/adult-social-care-and-public-health-complaints/>

➤ **Useful contacts**

Children, Adults & Health
South Gloucestershire Council
PO Box 1955
Bristol
BS37 0DE

Phone: 01454 868007

Email: csodesk@southglos.gov.uk

Access and Response Team

Children, Adults & Health
Access and Response team
South Gloucestershire Council
PO Box 1955
Bristol
BS37 0DE

Phone: 01454 866000

Email: accessandresponse@southglos.gov.uk

Website:

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/care-and-support-children-families/access-response-team-art/>

Private Sector Housing (Grants) Section

Department for Environment and Community Services
Private Sector Housing
PO Box 1954
Bristol
BS37 0DD

Phone: 01454 868126

Email: psechousing@southglos.gov.uk