Adaptations to your home
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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 read the information and decide on the next steps.

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 particular 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 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 of 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 adaptation costing £1,000 or less must be paid for by the Council.

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 Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Income Based Employment & Support Allowance, Housing Benefit 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 any funding in excess of this amount and can approve discretionary funding of up to £15,000 in agreed cases. This additional funding is in the form of a subsidised loan, although 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 as long as 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 or not 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 OT

The Occupational Therapist 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 Assessment House in Yate. A visit can also help you to visualise what your home may look like if equipment or adaptations are installed.

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 in order 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 or not you are eligible for a grant.

➢ The role of a Private Sector Housing Officer

A Private Sector Housing Officer (PSHO) will visit you at home to decide whether or not 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.
Completing the application

When the PSHO visits you at home they will complete the application forms and gather information that you need to provide as part of the application.

For example, information about your finances, estimates from contractors for the work, and where appropriate for more extensive works, information from surveyors and architects. This will normally be done electronically without the need for paper forms.

Checking your application

The PSHO will check your application to make sure that it is complete and will also check the estimates to ensure that the prices submitted are fair and for eligible works only. If the estimates are considered to be too high, they will advise you of this and give you the chance to obtain further estimates. Grant aid is limited to what the Council considers is a reasonable cost. You would have to pay for works over and above this.

The PSHO will assess your financial resources and will confirm whether or not you will get any grant, and if so, whether this will be a full or partial grant.

How long will my grant application take?

PSH 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 organise for the work to be carried out.

Inspection of the building work and grant payment

The contract is between the DFG applicant (you) and the contractor. Whilst the Council have an interest in ensuring that the work is undertaken to a good standard (and will assist where they can) this remains your responsibility. However the Council will withhold payment if we are not satisfied with the standard of workmanship. When the work is complete, the OT will check that the adaptation meets your needs. For larger jobs the building work may also be inspected by your agent and
the PSH officer. 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 the contractor.

- **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:

**Freepost Plus RTCT-JXLE-EETT**
South Gloucestershire Council
Children, Adults and Health - Complaints and FOI Team
Civic Centre, High Street
Kingswood
BRISTOL
BS15 9TR
Phone: 01454 865924
E-mail: CAHfeedback@southglos.gov.uk
Useful contacts

**Children, Adults & Health Department**
P.O Box 292,
The Civic Centre,
High Street,
Kingswood,
BRISTOL,
BS15 0DR

Tel: 01454 868007

**Access and Response Team**
PO Box 298,
The Civic Centre,
High Street,
Kingswood,
BRISTOL,
BS15 0DQ

Tel: 01454 866000

accessandresponse@southglos.gov.uk

**Private Sector Housing (Grants) Section**
PO Box 299,
The Civic Centre,
High Street,
Kingswood,
BRISTOL,
BS15 0DR

Tel: 01454 868126

psechousing@southglos.gov.uk