



HELP WITH **ADAPTATIONS** TO YOUR HOME

*A guide for disabled people in
private housing in Scotland*



INTRODUCTION



This leaflet is for people living in privately owned housing. It tells you about the help available from the local council with the cost of adapting a home for a disabled person. (If your home is rented from the council or a housing association you should ask your landlord about the help available.)

A revised system of assistance was introduced in April 2009. Councils are required by law to provide assistance in certain circumstances, but in other situations can decide what to offer. They must provide information about what help they will provide in each circumstance.

GETTING YOUR NEEDS ASSESSED

Help adapting your home is available if you have a need that is deemed a priority for assistance by your council.

This will be established by an assessment of your circumstances to see what sort of difficulties you are facing in your home and what might be the best way of helping you.

Where necessary, the assessment will also look at the needs of other family members living with you, including anyone who helps care for you.

The local council will decide whether your need is a priority – in other words, how urgently you need help. Each council has its own system for doing this and should give you information about it.




Sometimes the assessment may decide that instead of adapting your home another option – such as moving to a different property – is the best way of meeting your need. If this is the case, the council will work with you to explore your options.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the assessment you should ask the council's social work department how you can appeal. If you are still unhappy after the appeal, you may want to contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman on 0800 377 7330, SPSO Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR or ask@spsso.org.uk

When an adaptation is the best way to meet your need, you can apply for financial help.

WHAT ADAPTATIONS CAN I GET HELP WITH?

You can now get help with a wide range of structural adaptations. That is permanent changes to your home that involve building work such as:

-  replacing the bath with a walk-in shower
-  constructing a ramp to help you get into your home
-  fitting lower work surfaces to make the kitchen easier to use.

These are only examples – not a full list.

Most structural adaptations attract 'mandatory grant' – this means that the council must give a grant as long as you have been assessed as having a priority need.

HOW MUCH GRANT WILL I GET?

Where the council is awarding a mandatory grant, this must cover 80% of the actual cost of the work you have been assessed as needing.

The grant must cover 100% of the cost of the work if you receive one of these welfare benefits:

 **Income Support**

 **Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance**

 **Pension Credit (guarantee element)**

 **Income Related Employment and Support Allowance.**

A council may decide there are circumstances in which people entitled to 80% grant receive more. Your council should tell you what their policy on this is.

The council must be satisfied that the cost of the work is reasonable. They can ask you to get further estimates of the cost if they believe the estimates you've obtained are not reasonable.

Where you want to carry out work over and above what you have been assessed as needing – for example you want extra tiling when replacing the bath with a shower – you will need to pay for this yourself as grant will not cover these extra costs. Such additional work should not, however, affect the grant you receive to adapt your home.

HELP TO EXTEND YOUR HOME

Councils do not have to give grant for a house extension unless it is for bathroom or toilet facilities.

If an extension to your home does not attract mandatory grant – for example where this is for a ground-floor bedroom – councils can decide to give a ‘discretionary grant’. Your council can choose how it calculates any discretionary grant it offers.

You should check what your council’s policy on this is and what system it uses to determine how much grant you can receive.

Where you still face costs, the council must give you advice and information about any other options there may be for paying for the work, such as loans.

OTHER ASSISTANCE

This leaflet describes the help available under housing law.

Assistance may also be available from the council’s social work service. For example, under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, councils must ensure that where a disabled person’s need is assessed as being a priority, that need is met within a reasonable time period.

So, if you cannot cover the full cost of meeting your need, you should contact your social work department to discuss how your need can be met.




HELP FOR PRIVATE TENANTS

If you rent your home privately the landlord cannot unreasonably refuse to give consent for an adaptation that you need.

Once you have consent you should apply for assistance from the council in the same way as a home owner. If you later move out of the rented house, and your landlord requires you to remove the adaptation you made, your council must provide help to do this.

GETTING MORE INFORMATION

This leaflet is not intended to be a detailed guide to the law on help with adaptations. It provides only a general overview of what is set out in:

-  **Part 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006**
-  **The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 (Scheme of Assistance) Regulations 2008**
-  **Welfare law such as section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.**

For more information about getting help with adaptations you should contact your local council.

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

The two organisations listed below helped advise the Scottish Government on the new system of help with adaptations, and can offer specialist advice to disabled people on adaptations and other housing options:

Advice Service Capability Scotland

Tel: 0131 313 5510

Textphone: 0131 346 2529

Email: ascs@capability-scotland.org.uk

Ownership Options in Scotland

Tel: 0131 661 3400

Email: info@oois.org.uk

These organisations will be able to tell you about any other local or national advice agencies which may be able to help you further.

Update is Scotland's national disability information service. Their Helpline number is 0131 669 1600.

It's also worth noting that your local **Care and Repair** organisation provides advice and practical assistance for older and disabled people. Check the phone book or ask your council for details of your local Care and Repair.





The Scottish
Government

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The information in this booklet is also available in other languages and alternative formats from:

Housing Markets and Supply Division
The Scottish Government
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

The booklet can be viewed on (and downloaded from)
the Scottish Government website at www.scotland.gov.uk

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