FACT SHEET

HOME ADAPTATIONS AND DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

If you are living with a disabled child or are a disabled adult, you might be entitled to financial help if you need to make your home more accessible, or if you need specialist equipment to help you manage day-to-day tasks. This fact sheet offers a brief overview of some of the assistance available and how to apply for it.

Needs assessment

If you need support with daily living because you or a family member has a disability, or a long-term health condition, you have the right to a needs assessment by your local authority.

You can request an assessment by contacting your local Social Services department. In Northern Ireland, assessments are carried out by your local health and social care trust.

Why might adaptations be needed?

- To help a child or adult with a disability stay in their current home
- To provide safe access in and around the home
- Help a person with a disability maintain or regain as much independence as possible in the home
- Allow parents/ carers to carry out their role in a safe, practical home environment

Major or Minor Adaptations?

The financial help that is available depends on whether the adaptations you need to make to your home are major or minor.

- **Minor adaptations**: for example, fitting lever taps in the kitchen, or hand rails around the home.
- **Major adaptations (usually funded by a Disabled Facilities Grant)**: for example, installing a downstairs bedroom/ wet room, widening doorways for wheelchair access, or lowering work tops in your kitchen.

What is a Disabled Facilities Grant?

A Disabled Facilities Grant or DFG is available from Local Authorities (LA) and Councils in England, Ireland and Wales to help pay for essential home adaptations. To be eligible for a DFG you, or the person you're applying for must:

- Own the property (be an owner-occupier or landlord)
- Be a tenant (private, local authority or housing association)
- Intend to live in the property during the grant period (currently 5 years)

The local authority or council need to be happy that the proposed adaptations are;

- necessary and appropriate to meet the disabled person's needs – this should also take into consideration the needs of parents/ carers
- reasonable, practical and feasible – depending on condition and age of the property

Maximum DFG Payable:		
England	Up to £30,000	Depending on your income you may need to pay toward the cost of the work (means tested). Children under the age of 18 automatically qualify for the grant (no means test).
N. Ireland	Up to £25,000	
Wales	Up to £36,000	
Scotland	DFG is not available. Local authorities work on a 'Scheme of assistance' policy. The amount available varies depending on where you live. Speak to your local social service/ Occupational Therapy department for advice	

Important! You must have grant approval before starting any adaptation work, otherwise you may not receive any grant assistance.

How to apply

The first step is for an Occupational Therapist (OT) to carry out an assessment of the disabled person's needs and the home environment. The OT assessment and recommendations are required as evidence that the adaptations are essential.

To request an OT assessment you should contact your local Social Service Department – **but be aware that some authorities have a long OT waiting lists, so we recommend starting this process as soon as possible.**

What should you think about before meeting your OT?

The OT assessment should be a joint process. It's important for the disabled person/ parents to have an active role in this process by thinking about what is important to them or the child and what changes would help increase their independence, participation and safety within the home environment.

Some people find it useful to keep a diary about the things they find difficult or are unable to do without help. Points to consider are:

- Access in and out of the property – is there a steep incline or lots of steps?
- Are there stairs inside the house? If so, how do you manage them now or how will you manage in the future?
- Can you easily access your bedroom and bathroom? Consider how you get in and out of bed or bath, or on and off the toilet.
- Is the kitchen manageable? Are worktops/sink/taps at the correct height for wheelchair access?

Support from the AT Society

The family support team at the AT Society will be very happy to provide more information or talk through these issues with you. They can offer you guidance and practical support right through the process from assessment to completion.

Contact them on 01582 760733 or by email at support@atsociety.org.uk.