

CCH 61 - January 2008

Adaptations to your home



This information explains what adaptations are available and how you can apply for them.

Adaptations to your home are a way of helping you, or someone you live with, to be as safe and independent as possible at home. South Gloucestershire Council can provide a grant towards adaptations to your home.

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① This information is also available in other languages, in large print, braille, or on audio tape. Please phone ☎ **01454 865769** or email ✉ **cccommunications@southglos.gov.uk**

www.southglos.gov.uk access free at your local library

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

For all queries about adapting your home please phone the **Adult Customer Services 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 of a disabled child or young person** please contact the Occupational Therapist in the **Child Health and Disability Team (CHAD) on 01454 866364**. See page 10 for further contact details.

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

After you have spoken to a Customer Services Officer, an **Occupational Therapist (OT)** will visit you at home to **assess your needs**. They will advise you about equipment or adaptations that need to be made to your home. They will recommend the most effective solution to meet your needs but will also advise you of other choices.

Because of the high demand for our services there may probably be a **wait** for a visit by an OT. The length of your wait will depend on your individual circumstances and the demand on the service at that particular time. However we aim to respond as quickly as possible. In the majority of cases this will be within a few weeks but in some cases it may be longer.

> **Does the Council have to adapt my home?**

An adaptation will only be proposed if it is **necessary and appropriate to meet a disabled person's needs**.

We can refuse to adapt a property if we believe the scheme is not reasonable or practical depending on the age or condition of your home

or if it would not meet safety requirements. If adapting the property does not meet all of your needs, or the work is not practical, 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 adaptation please contact the **Community Care Customer Service on 01454 868007** to explain your new needs. The process may be speeded up, depending on how your needs have changed.

What help is available?

Minor adaptations

If you live in your own property or you have a private landlord, (this includes a Housing Association) the Occupational Therapy Team will notify the Private Sector Housing Team of their assessment. The Private Sector Housing Team will organise your minor adaptations **costing up to £1,000**, paid for by the Council. You will not have to contribute anything towards the cost of these works.

Major adaptations

If you need an adaptation to your home that costs **more than £1,000**, you can apply for a **Disabled Facilities Grant**. You can apply for yourself, or a member of your family, or someone else who lives with you.

If the adaptations are viewed as urgent, we aim to process your grant application within **28 working days**. If the adaptation work is very complex a final decision will take longer.

Works costing over £1,000 will be means-tested to determine how much, if anything, the disabled person will need to pay towards the cost. Please note that this does not apply in the case of clients in receipt of Income Support, Income-based Jobseekers

Allowance or Pension Guarantee Credit. In addition there is no means-testing where adaptations are proposed for the benefit of disabled children.

The maximum grant available by law is £25,000. The Disabled Facilities Grant Panel 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 an interest-free loan, which is repayable on the sale, or other transfer of ownership, of the property.

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**.

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.

The role of your OT

- If your adaptation needs are under £1,000 you will need to complete a **Grant Application Form**. Your OT can assist you with this.
- If the work is over £1,000 you will need to complete a **Grant Enquiry Form** to give a brief outline of your housing and financial situation. This is given to the Grants Team.
- 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.

The role of a Grant Officer

- A Grant Officer will visit you at home to decide whether or not the work proposed is reasonable and practical.
- They will also explain the grant process to you, assist you in completing your application and give you an informal assessment of how much, if anything, you will have to pay towards the cost of the works.

We advise everyone to apply for a grant even if your means-tested contribution will cover the full cost of the works. This is because any contribution that you make now may benefit 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.

We work in partnership with a home improvement agency called **Care and Repair South Gloucestershire**. This agency supports older and/or disabled homeowners and tenants who want to repair and adapt their homes. See Page 10 for contact details. You can use this agency or another agent of your choice. Your Grant Officer can supply you with a list of agents but you are not obliged to choose any of them.

Completing the application pack

When the Grant Officer visits you at home they will bring a **grant application pack**.

You or your agent will need to 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 bigger jobs, information from surveyors and architects. The Grant Officer can help you to complete the forms where necessary.

Checking your application

The Grant Officer will check your application to make sure it is complete. They 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 Grant Officer will also carry out a formal test of resources, based on the information you have provided. This test will identify whether or not you will get a grant, and if so, whether this will be a full or partial grant.

Approval by Councillors

Brief details of your application are circulated to Councillors for their approval. As long as no objections are raised, your Grant Officer will write to you and your agent confirming that your grant has been approved. The process can be speeded up in urgent cases. When you have received your approval letter and you are satisfied that all the funds are in place to pay for the works you, or your agent, can place an order with the contractor.

How long will my grant application take?

It can take some time to provide a grant due to the large number of applications we receive, but we aim to process most applications **within three to six months months**. Works costing £1,000 or less and urgent cases are normally processed within a week of receipt of the Occupational Therapist's referral.

The speed with which we can deal with your application depends upon the **priority of your needs**, compared to those of other people requesting adaptations. We prioritise requests in the same way as requests for adaptations.

If there is a funding shortfall

If there is a funding shortfall and/or a contribution to the costs is required, you or your agent will need to obtain funds to pay the difference. People have often found help from charitable sources. Care and Repair or an advocate acting on your behalf may be able to advise you.

Organising for the work to be done

When you have received the grant it is then 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

When the work is complete, the OT, your agent and sometimes the Grant Officer, depending on the size of the job, will inspect the building works to ensure that they meet your needs. For larger jobs, the work will also be inspected during construction. You, or your agent, and your OT will be given a Satisfaction Form to sign and return to the Grant Officer along with the contractor's invoice. You can choose for the grant to be paid direct to you or the contractor.

What if I'm not happy with the service?

If you have a problem with the service the quickest way of sorting it out is to speak to the officer you are dealing with at the time. This could be your OT, your Grant Officer or agent.

If you are still unhappy you can make a complaint using the Community Care Department's complaints procedure. Please ask for a leaflet explaining how to make your complaint (CCH82a *Have Your Say*) or contact the Complaints and Freedom of Information Team on **01454 865926** or email cccomplaints@southglos.gov.uk.

Further information

Ask your **Grant Officer** if you would like information about :

- the **Disabled Facilities Grant**
- the Council's policy on **Housing Renewal Assistance**

Ask your **OT** if you would like information about:

- *Do you need help in the Community?* CCH41
- *Occupational Therapy Service* CCH47
- *Have Your Say* CCH82a

Useful contacts

Occupational Therapy Service

Community Care and Housing Department
P.O Box 232
South Gloucestershire
BS15 4WZ

Telephone: 01454 868 007

Child Health and Disability Team

The Heath Resource Centre
2a Newton Road
Cadbury Heath
South Gloucestershire BS30 8EZ

tel: 01454 866364

fax: 01454 866261

Private Sector Housing (Grants) Section

Room G5, Kingswood Civic Centre
High Street
Kingswood
Bristol BS15 9TR

tel: 01454 868126

Care and Repair South Gloucestershire

96 High Street
Staple Hill
South Gloucestershire BS16 5HL

tel: 0117 904 2277

fax: 0117 904 2278

Better Care, Higher Standards

South Gloucestershire Council's Better Care, Higher Standards Charter describes the long-term community care that residents can expect to receive, and sets out a number of Standards relating to Service Delivery. The following principles have been taken from the Charter. Full details can be found on the Council's website at www.southglos.gov.uk

(a) Principles on which services and service delivery to South Gloucestershire Service Users are based

Community Care and Housing Department and Health Department staff will:

- Treat all people with respect and fairness, and determine, plan and deliver services based on individual need (including religious or cultural need) without discrimination.

Use Plain English or the preferred language, and the most suitable form of communication (for example, large print, audio cassette, Braille, British Sign Language) so that everybody can access services. For example, any proposed medical treatment, including any risks involved in that treatment and any alternatives, should be clearly explained. Verbal information will be backed up with written confirmation if necessary or if required.

- Be competent and fully trained in their jobs.
- Provide services on the basis of laid-down Fair Access to Care Standards.
- Work in partnership with Services Users, potential Service Users and Carers to involve them in decisions, give them the information they need to help them make informed choices about their care, and help them remain as independent as possible.
- Work in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Any information will be accurately recorded, and only necessary information will be held on file. Service Users and Carers have a right to see their own files.
- Pass on relevant information if services are required from more than one body (e.g. Community Care and Housing Department and Health Department) so that Service Users or Carers do not have to repeat the same information (permission will be sought before passing on such information, unless a person presents a danger either to themselves or to others).

- One example of information sharing is the Single Assessment Process. This is part of a range of initiatives intended to make services more accessible for Older People, in which Community Care and Housing staff and Health staff work together to ensure that information is shared with fellow professionals to reduce duplication and speed up the provision of services.
- Encourage Service Users and Carers to give their views, with the assistance of representative or advocacy organisations if necessary; for example, to choose which residential or nursing home to go to (provided it is suitable for the type of care required and has a vacancy available, or be able to offer one within a reasonable time scale).
- Make sure that Service Users and Carers know whom to contact in the first instance if there is a problem with services, and how to lodge a formal complaint if necessary, with the knowledge that it will not affect the way they are treated.
- Monitor all services provided or purchased/commissioned by Community Care and Housing and publish performance against targets on a regular basis.

(b) Expectations of Service Users and Carers

Service Users and Carers are asked to:

- Treat all staff with respect and dignity.
- Be punctual for any appointments (or notify the relevant member of staff if there is a problem/difficulty as early as possible).
- Make staff aware of any communication needs they may have (e.g. hearing loss, preferred language, or difficulty understanding information).
- Make any agreed payments promptly.
- Inform the relevant department/member of staff if services or equipment are no longer needed.