

Department of the Environment

Department of Health and Social Security

Welsh Office



HOUSING SERVICES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

**A guidance manual for local authority
advisory booklets**

Department of the Environment

Department of Health and Social Security

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HOUSING SERVICES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

This guidance manual, prepared for local authorities who wish to issue consumer advisory booklets on housing services for disabled people, is in two parts. At the centre is a model guide, covering which are notes for the guidance of local authorities preparing booklets in the style of the model.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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GUIDANCE NOTES

1. 'Organising house adaptations for disabled people', published by HMSO in December 1982, was jointly issued by the Department of the Environment, the Department of Health and Social Security and the Welsh Office. It was the report of a study commissioned by the three departments, and undertaken for them by Social and Community Planning Research. The purpose of the SCPR study was to investigate how the procedures recommended in the 1978 joint circular 'Adaptations of housing for people who are physically handicapped' (DOE 59/78; WO 104/78; DHSS LAC(78)14) were operating in practice, and to make recommendations. Arising from the inquiries and the evidence obtained, the author, Patricia Prescott Clarke, made 41 recommendations for improving the service, of which recommendation 4 read:

Local authorities should issue a booklet, jointly prepared by the social services, housing and improvement grant departments, which describes house adaptation services for disabled people. The purpose is (i) to publicise the services available, and (ii) to inform potential clients about the kind of help they may be able to obtain.

Expenditure constraints

2. The three departments recognise that the issuing of booklets of this kind could generate an increased demand for services which local authorities may not readily be able to provide at a time when their financial resources are severely restrained. On the other hand, the appreciation was that, for authorities wishing to respond positively, it would be valuable for there to be a publication giving guidance on the content of such booklets.

Evaluation of published booklets

3. To help determine the form and scope of the proposed publication, a general inquiry was made among local authorities in England and Wales to ascertain which authorities had already issued advisory booklets on house adaptation services for disabled people, and to obtain copies of them. Some 25 booklets were assembled; of these, the majority were concerned with improvement grant provision only. A few covered all house adaptation services, and one covered the range of local housing services available for disabled people.

4. The evaluation of these booklets indicated that, rather than local authorities issuing booklets describing housing adaptation services only, it would be advantageous to take the opportunity to advise consumers about housing services for disabled people generally. The principal component of these booklets would, however, be advice on adaptation services.

House adaptation procedures

5. As the SCPR study confirms, there are considerable variations among local authorities for administering house adaptations. Over the years since an impetus was given to house adaptation work by the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act of 1970, local authorities have pragmatically developed their own procedures for dealing with house adaptations, without there being any official central government guidance on preferred administrative arrangements.

6. Circular 59/78 advised local authorities that, taking account of relevant social services and housing legislation, the primary responsibility for carrying out house adaptations in public sector housing should rest with the housing rather than the social services authority. On the private sector side, it was rare before 1978 for district authorities to have an involvement; the normal arrangement was for adaptations to private housing to be carried out by the social services authority. The circular drew attention to the availability of grants under the Housing Act 1974, and in recent years it has become general practice for private sector adaptations to be funded by improvement and intermediate grants.

7. Arising from the way that house adaptation procedures have evolved, a common arrangement is that three local authority departments are principally involved—social services, housing and environmental health. In the case of metropolitan district councils and London borough councils, all three departments are in one authority. In the case of non-metropolitan local authority areas, the responsibilities are shared between county councils who administer social services, and district councils who administer housing and environmental health services.

8. For house adaptation procedures to be effective in non-metropolitan areas, there needs to be cooperation between the county council and the district council. Within any county territory, there will be different procedures among the districts, and on this account it is not suggested that a single booklet on housing services should be prepared by the county authority; the recommendation is that the preparation of advisory booklets should be a collaborative exercise between the social services department of the county and the housing and environmental health departments of the districts, with a booklet being issued for each district authority. On this basis, the guidance which follows has been drafted.

Model guide format

9. Rather than taking the form of a checklist of items, the material drafted is a model guide, based on typical county and district procedures, using the fictional names of 'Beechshire' for the county and 'Nutbridge' for the district. All authorities will, however, find that the model guide has to be modified to accord with their own policies and procedures.

10. The model guide has been drafted to communicate information to consumers who are disabled; it is not written for local authority officers. For this reason, a deliberate effort has been made to keep the language simple rather than officially correct, for example, the generic term 'Home improvement grants' is used rather than 'House renovation grants'; there is no mention of specific pieces of governing legislations or circulars; and there is no reference to the status of GIAs or HAAs.

11. For straightforward communications with a consumer readership, the model guide as drafted may be felt to be too elaborate and lengthy. The determining consideration was that the wide range of relevant issues ought to be covered; local authorities will decide for themselves where omissions can reasonably be made to achieve greater brevity and simplicity.

Modifications needed to the model guide

12. Aside from varying administrative or financial procedures,

examples of circumstances where modifications to the model guide will be needed are:

for social services authorities

- i. Where community occupational therapists are not employed, or are employed by the health authority.
- ii. Where aids technicians are not employed (para 9).
- iii. Where the eligibility of disabled people to improvement grants is not subject to social services registration, as it need not be under the Housing Rents and Subsidies Act 1975 (para 22).
- iv. Where the preferred initial approach for an improvement grant is to the social services rather than the environmental health department (para 23).
- v. Where there is not a cut-off point for minor works below which a means test is not administered (para 28).
- vi. Where it is not general practice to insure and maintain stairlifts (para 58).

for housing and environmental health authorities

- i. Where grants are dealt with other than by an environmental health department.
- ii. Where there are tenants of new town development corporation housing in the district, or tenants of other local authorities.
- iii. Where the environmental health department does not have an agency service for helping with grant applications (para 54).
- iv. Where receipt of housing benefit or supplement benefit is not used as a simple test of hardship for grant purposes (para 51)*.

for London borough authorities

- i. For councils with GLC housing, amendments relating to GLC responsibilities.
- ii. Substitution of London eligible expense limits for grants for the 'elsewhere' amounts cited in the guide.

Adaptation works

13. The prospective list of adaptation works (para 10) is purposely not exhaustive; it excludes, for example, (i) installing entryphone systems,

* For official guidance on the assessment of hardship, reference should be made to para 10 of Appendix B of Department of the Environment Circular 21/80 (Welsh Office 42/80) 'Housing Acts 1974 and 1980, Improvement of Older Housing'.

Nutbridge District Council
Beechshire County Council



HOUSING SERVICES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

Nutbridge District Council
Beechshire County Council

HOUSING SERVICES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

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IF YOU ARE DISABLED

(1) If you are disabled, it may well happen that you have difficulty carrying out everyday tasks around the home. There may be problems with steps or stairs, an awkwardly planned kitchen, a bath which is difficult to get in and out of, or a toilet which you cannot reach. Similarly, if you have a child who is handicapped or if you are caring for a frail elderly relative, you may have the same kind of problems.

(2) If you do have problems like this, there are two ways of tackling them. First, by making your existing home more manageable, with the help of aids or equipment or some modifications to the fabric of the house. Second—and probably only when the first possibility is ruled out—by moving to a house or flat which is more convenient for you, or can more easily be adapted.

(3) This booklet will, we hope, help you to get your problems solved.



There may be problems with steps

WHO DOES WHAT?

(4) There are three local authority departments which are principally concerned to help disabled people with their housing needs.

(5) In Beechshire County Council:

The *Social Services Department*, whose occupational therapists are trained to assess the overall needs of disabled people with a view to enabling them to be as independent as possible around the home; this may be done by arranging for the provision of household aids and equipment, and, where the house is unsuitable, considering with the disabled person the advisability of adaptations or, failing that, the possibility of moving to a house which is more convenient.

(6) In Nutbridge District Council:

The *Housing Department*, whose officers are responsible for the management of council houses, and, where adaptations are needed for disabled people living in council housing, for seeing that the work is carried out.

The *Environmental Health Department*, whose officers deal with home improvement grants—these are grants which disabled people can apply for if their house needs to be adapted.



Who does what?

MAKING YOUR PRESENT HOME MORE MANAGEABLE

(7) If, on account of difficulties caused by your disability, you need to make your home more manageable, it may be that suitable aids or equipment will help, or it could be that a house adaptation is wanted, which means making modifications to the fabric of the dwelling.

(8) Initially, you should write or telephone to the manager of the Nutbridge area office of the Beechshire social services department, to explain what your difficulties are. He may arrange for an occupational therapist to visit your home who will, by discussing your problem with you, assess what might best be done.

Aids and Equipment

(9) If the need is, for example, for

- raising the level of the wc seat
- a seat to go in the bath
- grab rails by the bath or wc
- tap turners for the kitchen sink
- a mobile hoist or small lifting aid

the occupational therapist may be able to provide aids on loan to you. For items which need fixing, such as grab rails to the bath or an extra handrail to the stairs, the social services department has an aids technician, and the occupational therapist may arrange for him to do the work for you.

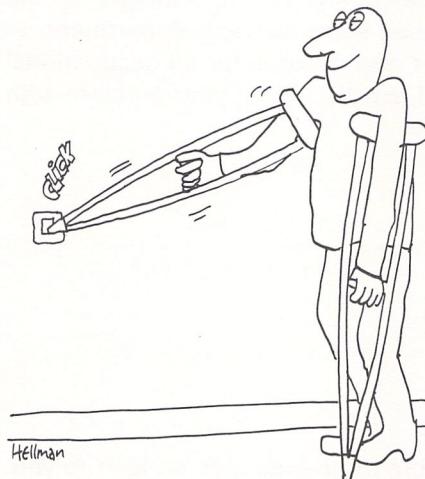
HAVING THE HOUSE ADAPTED

(10) If the occupational therapist has assessed there to be a need for work of a kind which involves some work on the fabric of the dwelling, for example

- fixing a ramp at the front door
- putting in sliding doors
- relocating electric socket outlets or switches to make them more reachable
- putting in a shower in place of the bath
- putting in an accessible wc

- installing a stairlift over the stairs
- adapting the house so that living, sleeping and bathing accommodation are all on one floor

she will liaise with one of the housing agencies to discuss with them whether and how they can help. If the work which needs doing is relatively simple, she may arrange for the social services department to do it for you.



Making switches more reachable

(11) If you are living in a two-storey house where the bedrooms and bathroom upstairs are not accessible to you because of your disability, it may be sensible to consider installing an electric stairlift over the stairs, or a vertical home lift. Further advice about stairlifts is on page 17.

If you live in a council house or flat

(12) If very extensive alteration work would be needed to make your house manageable, it may be that the sensible solution would be for you to be rehoused in more suitable accommodation; possible ways of doing this are discussed on page 9.

(13) If adaptation work has to be done to your house, the occupational therapist will liaise with the adaptations officer in the housing



If you live in a flat

department, who will visit you. If the council agrees to undertake the work, they will pay for it. The alternative is for you to apply for a home improvement grant, as described on pages 6 and 13. If you do this you may have to contribute towards the cost of the work.

(14) Your security of tenure and any rights you may have to buy your house from the council will not normally be affected by having adaptations done; the adaptations officer will tell you whether your right to buy might be affected.

If you are a housing association tenant

(15) If major adaptation work is needed, it will be carried out for you by the housing association. The occupational therapist will liaise with the local manager of your association to discuss how the work might be undertaken and funded. In the same way as if you were a council tenant, you may prefer to apply for a home improvement grant.

If your home is rented privately

(16) If a house adaptation is needed, you will need to discuss with your landlord what might be done. The best course may be for you to apply for a home improvement grant—the landlord cannot unreasonably withhold his consent that you do this.

If you live in an owner-occupied house

(17) If your home is privately owned and adaptation work is needed, the best course is to apply for a home improvement grant. The occupational therapist will discuss possibilities with you, and will liaise with the environmental health officer.

Rent and rates

(18) If you are a council or housing association tenant, your rent is unlikely to be increased unless substantial structural additions are made to your house; the adaptations officer or the housing association will be able to tell you or check for you.

(19) If you are a private tenant, you will need to check with your landlord whether your rent might be increased.

(20) If, as a consequence of the house being adapted, your rates are increased, it could be that the increase will be offset by your entitlement to rate relief, as noted on page 12.

How long might it take?

(21) Getting your house adapted may take a long time. While Beechshire County Council and Nutbridge District Council are anxious to help disabled people, particularly those with an urgent need, funds are limited, and the large number of requests for assistance received from disabled people means that it may not be possible to deal with your application immediately. A number of checks will need to be made before the work can begin; the occupational therapist or environmental health officer will be able to tell you what checks and approvals are needed, and how long everything might take.

HOME IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

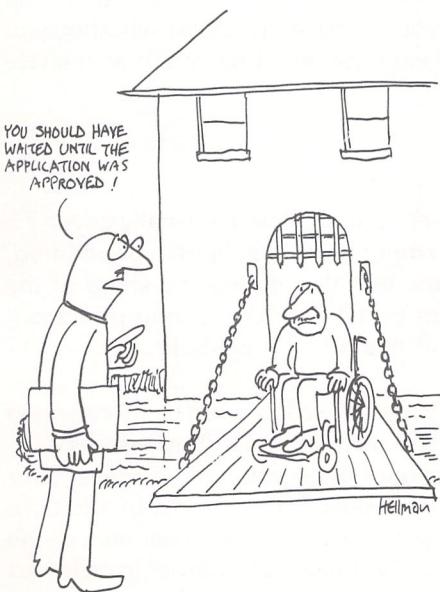
(22) For people who are disabled, there are special arrangements by which local authorities can give grants to help with house adaptations;

these arrangements are complicated, and are described in more detail in Appendix A on page 13. To be eligible for a grant, you will need, if you have not already done so, to register as a disabled person with Beechshire Social Services Department.

(23) The initial approach should be to the environmental health officer in Nutbridge District Council, who will arrange for an assessment to be made by an occupational therapist. If as a disabled person you are eligible for a grant, it does not matter how recently your house was built, or what its rateable value is.

(24) A home improvement grant is a grant—it is not a loan. If you receive a grant, it is only in very rare circumstances (which the environmental health officer will explain to you) that any of it might have to be paid back.

(25) If you are thinking of applying for a grant, *it is absolutely essential that you do not start doing any building work before the grant is approved*; if you do, you may find that you cannot have a grant.



Applying for a grant

Employing an architect

(26) The grant will normally help cover professional fees; if you have it in mind to employ an architect, you should discuss your ideas with the environmental health officer before asking the architect to do any work for you. If you do employ an architect, the occupational therapist may assist you with explaining to him what you need.

THE COST OF HOUSE ADAPTATIONS—WHO PAYS?

(27) If you are a Nutbridge council tenant, the council will normally pay for the adaptation work. Similarly, if you are a housing association tenant, the housing association will normally pay.

(28) If you are in an owner-occupied or privately rented house, the adaptation work may be funded directly by the social services department. If it is, you will not have to pay anything where the cost does not exceed £200—this amount is determined by Beechshire social services committee to minimise administrative costs, and is subject to revision. Where the cost will be more than this, the occupational therapist will advise you at an early stage whether you might be asked to cover some of the expense, and how much your share is likely to be.

Improvement grant work

(29) For works which are grant-aided, the grant will normally cover 75 per cent of the cost, or 90 per cent where there is a 'hardship' addition, as described on page 15. This means that the applicant's share of the total cost will usually be 25 per cent or 10 per cent. But in practice it may not be necessary for you to find this amount of cash.

(30) To determine whether the social services department can help you with the proportion of the cost which you would otherwise have to meet, a social worker or occupational therapist will discuss your financial circumstances with you. For people with a hardship addition, the social services department will normally cover the 10 per cent of the cost which is not funded by the grant. If yours is not a hardship case and you receive a 75 per cent grant, you may, if you think you will have difficulty finding the 25 per cent, ask for an assessment to be made. If

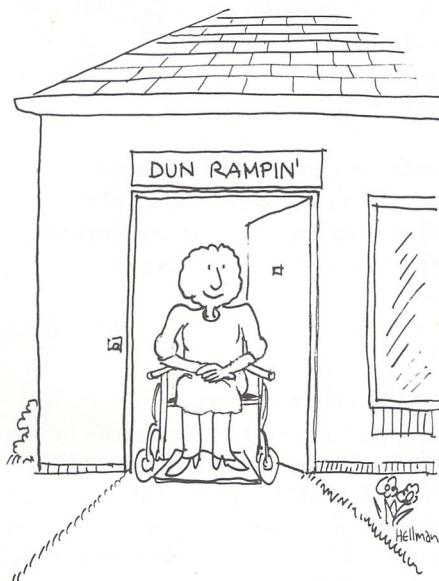
the social services department is not after all able to help you, or can only contribute a part of the cost, there is the possibility that Nutbridge District Council may be able to help with a loan, should other sources (such as a building society loan) not be available. The social worker or occupational therapist will, on your behalf, check with the district council the terms on which the loan might be made.

VAT

(31) Where adaptation work is done on account of your disability, some or all of the work may be exempt from VAT charges. If the work is grant-aided, the grant will cover VAT charges. If you are arranging the work privately, the Citizens Advice Bureau may be able to advise you how much of the work will be exempt from VAT charges.

MOVING TO A NEW HOUSE

(32) If your existing home cannot be satisfactorily adapted and the only solution is to move to a new home which is suitable, the local authority may be able to help.



Moving to a new home

Moving to a suitable council house

(33) Among its stock of housing, Nutbridge District Council has

- some wheelchair housing—this is purpose-designed housing for people who use wheelchairs
- some mobility housing—this is ordinary housing which, because it has no steps or stairs, is generally convenient for disabled people to live in
- some bungalows and flats specially designed for elderly people
- some sheltered housing—these are schemes for elderly people where there is a resident warden who can help tenants when needed, for example in an emergency.

(34) If you are already a council tenant, and wish to transfer or exchange to more suitable housing, you should discuss with the lettings officer in the housing department what possibilities there may be and whether your right to buy might be affected. If you are a housing association tenant, it may be possible for an exchange to be made so that you can move to a suitable council house.

(35) If you are an owner-occupier or rent privately, you can put your name on the Nutbridge housing department waiting list for a suitable council house. The lettings officer will be able to tell you what chance there is that the council will be able to help.

(36) If you have a handicapped child and you think it may become very difficult for you to manage in your existing house as your child gets older, you should get in touch with the lettings officer in Nutbridge housing department to discuss what possibilities there might be for a move.

If you wish to become a housing association tenant

(37) There are in Nutbridge district a number of housing association schemes, some of which incorporate dwellings which are suitable for disabled people. The occupational therapist in the social services area office will be able to tell you where these schemes are, and who you should contact to find out about them. Alternatively, the Nutbridge Housing Advisory Centre or the Citizens Advice Bureau will give you information about local housing associations.

(38) If on account of your disability you have special needs which cannot be catered for in any existing council or housing association dwelling, it is possible that a housing association might be able to rehouse you in suitable rented accommodation by purchasing a potentially suitable property and then adapting it for you. This course of action will inevitably take some time but if you think it might be the way forward you should ask the Nutbridge Housing Advisory Centre for a list of housing associations to whom you might write.

If you wish to move outside Nutbridge

(39) If you are a council or housing association tenant and you have a positive reason for wishing to move outside Nutbridge, for example to live near relatives who will be able to give you practical help, you may be able to make use of the tenants' exchange scheme and the National Mobility Scheme. For information you should get in touch with the housing management assistant in Nutbridge housing department.

If you wish to buy a suitable house in the Nutbridge district

(40) On a number of sites Nutbridge District Council is planning to build housing for sale which will be designed to be convenient for elderly or handicapped people. There are also sites where the council has released land to private housebuilders for development, and where the developers concerned have been asked to build new housing which will be convenient for disabled people. The guidelines on which developers are asked to work are those for mobility housing, which means that there will not be steps or stairs, and the houses will generally be manageable for people who have wheelchairs. For other people who, on account of disability, have special housing needs, private housebuilders working locally will often be pleased to make modifications to houses under construction, provided that instructions are given at an early stage and there is a commitment to buy.

(41) For disabled people who are buying their own homes, Nutbridge council may be able to assist with mortgages, although they would first expect applicants to have sought to obtain a normal building society loan. In the case of housing which the council is building for sale, there may be the option of shared ownership for disabled people who cannot afford the outright purchase price, which means that the purchaser buys

a share of the property and pays rent on the remainder. For information on how Nutbridge council may be able to help, you should get in touch with the housing adviser in the legal department.

OTHER SERVICES

Insulation grants

(42) As a disabled person, you may be eligible for a higher than normal grant to insulate the roof in your home. This grant will be quite separate from a home improvement grant; the environmental health officer will be able to advise you.

Rate relief

(43) If you are disabled and there is special provision in your home on account of your disability, for example an extra bathroom or wc, or extra space because you have to use a wheelchair, you will probably be entitled to relief on the rates which you pay. If you think you might be eligible for this help, you should contact the rating officer in Nutbridge treasurer's department.

Housing benefit

(44) You may be entitled to help with your rent or rates through the housing benefit scheme, which is run by Nutbridge council. Entitlement is calculated on the basis of your income, whether anyone else lives with you, and how much rent or rates you pay. Disabled people may be able to get extra help; if you think you might qualify you should ask Nutbridge council for a housing benefit claim form.

Aids to daily living

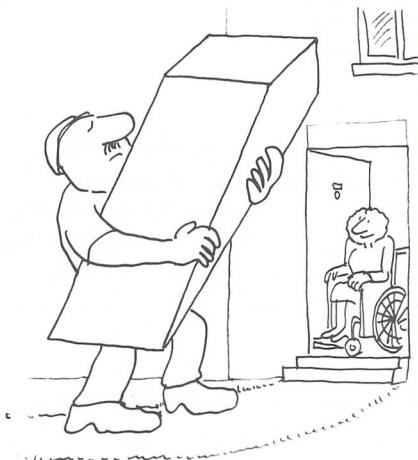
(45) The social services department at its area office in Nutbridge has a small display of aids and equipment which you may find it helpful to visit to see whether there are household aids which could be of value to you. You should get in touch with the occupational therapist at the area office.

APPENDIX A. HOME IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

(46) There are two kinds of housing grant with conditions which are specially geared to help disabled people; the first is an *intermediate* grant and the second an *improvement* grant. The purpose of an



Intermediate grant



Improvement grant

intermediate grant is to assist you with the provision of basic amenities (in particular a bath or wc) which you do not have, or where they are inaccessible to you on account of your disability and how they are located in your home. The purpose of an improvement grant is to improve your home generally, to make it more manageable with the kind of disablement problems you have. The environmental health officer will, in consultation with the occupational therapist, advise which grant you should apply for.

Intermediate grants

(47) If you qualify for an intermediate grant, the advantage is that you have a statutory right to it—the local authority is required by law to give it to you. Intermediate grants are, however, made for a fixed sum, which may only cover part of the cost of the work you need doing. For disabled people, this fixed sum is 75 per cent of what is known as the 'eligible expense limit for standard amenities', or 90 per cent if you have the hardship addition. The expense limits are from time to time raised by the Government; at present (1984) they are:

a fixed bath or shower	£340
the water supply to a bath or shower	£430
a wash hand basin	£130
the water supply to a basin	£230
a sink in the kitchen	£340
the water supply to the sink	£290
a wc	£515

Improvement grants

(48) Because the adaptation work you want doing may not be the kind of work which can be funded by an intermediate grant, the environmental health officer may advise you to apply for an improvement grant. The important factor is that an improvement grant is discretionary—the local authority is allowed under the law to give you a grant, but it is not obliged to do so, nor is it obliged to make it for the full percentage permitted.

(49) The broad test for a 'disabled' improvement grant is that the adaptation works are necessary because of your disability. The occupational therapist will advise you of the kind of work which a grant might cover.

(50) For disabled people, the rate of grant which the local authority will give you will normally be 75 per cent. This means 75 per cent of the eligible expense, and since the maximum expense authorised by the Government for houses in Nutbridge district is at present £10200 (an amount which is subject to revision by the Department of the Environment), the maximum grant you could receive will be £7650, or £9180 if you have the hardship addition which puts the rate of grant up to 90 per cent.

The 'hardship' addition

(51) If, with a grant at the normal rate for disabled people of 75 per cent, there would be hardship for you if you were to have to find the other 25 per cent from your own cash resources, it could be that you will be entitled to the hardship addition which will put the grant rate up to 90 per cent. Nutbridge council does not have strict rules as to what constitutes hardship, but you can expect to obtain the hardship addition if you are receiving housing benefit or supplementary benefit from DHSS.



What constitutes hardship

Necessary repairs

(52) If the environmental health officer tells you that, in addition to the work being done because of your disability, major repairs are needed to keep your house in good order, these repairs may be grant-aided (at the 75 per cent or 90 per cent rate according to your entitlement) to an additional eligible expense limit of up to £3000 if you have an intermediate grant, and up to 70 per cent of the grant if you have an improvement grant.

Getting the work done

(53) If you do receive a grant, the contract for carrying out the adaptation work will be between you (as the applicant) and the building contractor. This may seem daunting, but the environmental health officer and the occupational therapist will help you to see that the work gets done satisfactorily.

(54) If you wish, you can ask the environmental health department about their special service for helping you fill in the application, obtaining the certificates about the ownership of the property that are needed, drawing up the plans, obtaining planning permission if it is needed, and obtaining building regulations approval. The environmental health officer may also be able to give a list of local contractors who might be interested to tender for the work; it is normally a requirement that you should obtain competitive tenders.



Getting the work done

(55) Once the grant has been approved, you should not ask the builder to do any extra work which may not be grant-aided without finding out how much it will cost—it is best to ask the builder to confirm extra costs in writing. If extra work is found to be needed on account of your disability and which had not been anticipated when your grant was approved, you should immediately let the environmental health officer know, as he may be able to arrange for the amount of your grant to be increased.

(56) For more information about how grants are administered, you should ask at the housing department for the Department of the Environment booklet 'Home Improvement Grants, A guide for Home-owners, Landlords and Tenants'.

APPENDIX B. STAIRLIFTS

(57) The practicability of installing a stairlift will depend on what kind of staircase you have; usually it helps if the staircase has a straight flight. The occupational therapist will advise you about this.

(58) Where a stairlift is fitted, it is important that it is properly maintained and that you are insured against any accidents that may occur with it. To ensure that all stairlifts are properly maintained and insured, the social services department covers the cost of this service; there is no charge to you.

(59) Where a stairlift is installed, the social services department may wish to recover it and reuse it elsewhere when it is no longer needed by the client to whom it was provided. When stairlifts are provided, the total cost is usually met by the social services authority. But is it possible for an improvement grant to be used to help fund the cost of a stairlift; in such cases the social services department may make a nominal financial contribution towards the cost of the installation in return for the right to recover the stairlift from you when it is no longer needed.

APPENDIX C. USEFUL ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Beechshire County Council

Social Services Department Headquarters
Social Services Department Area Office

Nutbridge District Council

Housing Department Headquarters/Area Offices
Treasurer's Department/Rates Office
Legal Department
Environmental Health Department
Planning Department
Housing Advisory Centre

Others

Beechshire District Health Authority
Nutbridge Community Health Council
DHSS Office
Citizens Advice Bureau
Nutbridge Association for the Disabled

(ii) widening doors, (ii) reconstructing kitchens, (iv) installing vertical home lifts, (v) providing central heating, and (vi) making an extension to the house to provide ground floor facilities. The purpose here has been to avoid presenting a catalogue which consumers might be encouraged to regard as a shopping list; local authorities will extend or limit the list as they think appropriate.

Housing built for sale

14. In para 38 there are notes on the availability of suitable housing being built for sale, either by local authorities or private developers; there is the suggestion that local authorities should encourage private developers to build suitable housing for disabled people, for example to the mobility housing standards which have been widely adopted by housing authorities and housing associations for their new building.

Appendix A

15. The appendix on improvement grants has been separated out in order to keep the main part of the guide short and cohesive, and because the practical information cannot easily be absorbed into the generality of the main text. Local authorities may elect (i) to use the appendix as it is drafted, (ii) to omit it entirely, or (iii) to edit and incorporate it in the main text under the heading 'Home improvement grants'.

16. In Appendix A cash figures are quoted for eligible expense limits etc for improvement and intermediate grants. The figures quoted will almost certainly be obsolete by the time that local authorities, working to the model guide, have prepared their own publications; there will be a regular need for the figures to be updated, and, on account of printing costs (particularly where advertising is entailed), the preference might be to avoid giving any cost figures in printed booklets, or give cost information on a looseleaf typescript insert.

17. The decision to include cost figures in the text of the model guide was affected by the appreciation that consumer readers would be confused by a need to refer to a looseleaf insert. But rather than expect local authorities to print new booklets each year, the suggestion is that a

looseleaf insert should be issued giving updated figures, for example in a wallet formed by folding the end cover.

Appendix B

18. On stairlifts, information feedback from local authorities indicates that there can be particular organisational, financial and management problems, with there being a general need for procedures to be regularised between county and district authorities. The procedure outlined in para 59 is not one which it may be appropriate for local authorities to follow; it is included on the understanding that there are social services authorities who wish to retain the option to recover stairlifts (including those whose installation is grant-aided) and need to make it clear to consumers what their policy is. Corresponding advice may be given in respect of vertical home lifts.

19. In communications during the preparation of these notes, it has been suggested that social services may have a right of recovery if they contract with the client to maintain and insure a stairlift; on this issue it may be wise for legal advice to be sought regarding procedures.

Appendix C

20. Local authorities may wish to extend the list of useful addresses, for example by including gas and electricity undertakings, local housing associations, and national agencies such as the Centre on Environment for the Handicapped, the Disabled Living Foundation, the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation and the Wales Council for the Disabled.

Scope of model guide

21. The scope of the model guide has been limited to housing services for disabled people; it does not cover general services for handicapped people for which there is a DHSS consumer booklet 'Help for handicapped people'. Under the heading 'Other services' local authorities may wish to mention related services such as home helps, meals on wheels and community nursing. There may also be local schemes to help disabled people which can be included, for example MSC funded schemes for gardening and decorating.

Format of local authority publications

22. Local authorities will adapt the format of the model guide to suit their requirements; some authorities may wish, for example, for there to be a foreword from the chairman of the housing committee and/or the chairman of the social services committee commending the guide to local disabled people.

Advertisements

23. Among the local authority booklets already issued on house adaptations for disabled people, some incorporate advertisements to offset production and printing costs. Local authorities who decide to have advertisements in their booklets can seek a wide market, covering, for example, (i) local building, plumbing and electrical contractors, (ii) manufacturers of stairlifts and home lifts, (iii) manufacturers of alarm call systems and other aids and equipment for disabled people, (iv) wheelchair suppliers, (v) security installation companies, (vi) car conversion companies, (vii) car hire companies, (viii) local public transport undertakings, (ix) gas and electricity boards, and (x) the RIBA Client's Advisory Service.

Copyright

24. Attention is drawn to the copyright conditions itemised on the inside of the title page.

Cross references

25. To aid communications between local authority officers preparing a local booklet, paragraphs in the model guide are numbered. The expectation is that local booklets will be printed without paragraph numbers; on this account cross references are to pages.

Print size

26. The model guide in the publication is printed 9 point on 12. In the expectation that locally issued booklets will be read by people with impaired vision, local authorities may prefer to have a larger print size for their own booklets.

