Adapting your home

A guide for council tenants
If you or someone living in your property is disabled you may need your home adapted to meet your needs.

Adapting your home can make it easier for you to get in and out of. It can also help you move around indoors more easily. Your home may also be adapted to help you carry out daily living tasks.

For example, your home can be adapted by:

- widening doors and installing ramps
- installing a stair lift or a level access shower, making it easier for you to get to rooms and facilities
- making it easier for you to get in and out of your home or move more easily around indoors to help you to care for another person who lives in the property, such as a child

The council funds adaptations to council homes. Currently there is no means testing if you are a council tenant.

This guide tells you who to contact at the council and explains the adaptation process.

The key steps are listed below. More detail about each step is given later in this guide, including when we will contact you:

**Step 1 – Assessment**

**Step 2 – Design**

**Step 3 – Tenancy check**

**Step 4 – Getting the work done**

**Step 5 – Work is completed**

**Who to contact at the council**

Access Point is the single point of contact for advice and information about the range of social care services for adults in Brighton & Hove.

Tel: 01273 295555 for advice, information and a telephone assessment.

Minicom: 01273 296388

Email: accesspoint@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Children’s Occupational Therapy Service for children and young people with physical, developmental or sensory disabilities.

Main number: 01273 265780

Occupational Therapy: 01273 265806

The Daily Living Centre (DLC) provides information and advice about daily living equipment that helps people to lead a more independent life.

Tel: 01273 296132 or 296133

The centre has a wide range of over 800 pieces of equipment including some of the latest products for adults and children. You can try out any of this equipment by making an appointment with the occupational therapist. There is also a drop-in session at the centre every Wednesday between 10am and 4pm. These sessions are very popular and can be busy, so you may have a short wait before you are seen.

The Housing Adaptations Service (HAS) is responsible for the assessment for and delivery of major housing adaptations. The team is made up of occupational therapists and a technical team (including home improvement officers).

To contact the team, call 01273 292443.

Tenants Disability Network
email: tdnbhcc@gmail.com
tel: 01273 936934
Answerphone only. Leave a message and the name of the area rep you want to get in touch with.

Glossary

DLC
Daily Living Centre

HAS
Housing Adaptations Service

HIO
Home Improvement Officer

OT & OTA
Occupational Therapist & Occupational Therapy Assistant
Quick summary

Step 1 – Assessment
Access Point carries out an initial assessment and if you need a major adaptation refers you to the HAS or Children’s Services for a specialist assessment by an OT or an OTA.

Step 2 – Design
The OT will provide recommendations about the type of work required and discuss design options – the proposed work must be necessary & appropriate, and reasonable & practicable.

Step 3 – Tenancy check
The technical team requests a tenancy check & asbestos survey & carries out a technical pre-inspection before ordering works.

Step 4 – Getting the work done
The contractor contacts the client direct to arrange a start date.

Step 5 – Work is completed
The housing adaptations team carries out a check visit, the client completes a customer satisfaction survey and any outstanding problems are addressed.
Adults
Access Point is the first point of contact in Brighton & Hove for advice and information about social services for adults. Access Point will carry out an initial assessment of your needs and advise you about the services available to you.

If you need major adaptations to your home, you will be referred to the Housing Adaptations Service for a specialist assessment by an occupational therapist (OT). The OT will visit you at home and discuss the options for meeting your needs with you.

These could include:

- adapting your home
- moving to more suitable accommodation
- providing information about other health and support services

You will hear from the OT within 12 weeks from the date of the referral. If your needs are assessed as urgent and critical you will be contacted within two weeks.

Children aged 18 and under
For children and young people, the first point of contact for information and advice about social services is the Child Development and Disability Service.

If your child is already known to a professional (for example, a social worker, OT or physiotherapist) they can make a referral on your child’s behalf. Alternatively you can speak to the duty social care OT for advice.

If you need help with looking after a child or young person, a children’s social care OT will arrange a home visit to carry out an assessment of your child’s needs. The OT will discuss the options for meeting these needs with you.
If adapting your home is the best way to meet your needs, the OT will provide initial recommendations about the type of work required and discuss the design options with you.

Before agreeing that your home can be adapted, and funding the work to be done, the council needs to be sure that the proposed adaptation is necessary and appropriate to meet your needs, and that the work is reasonable and practicable to undertake.

The home improvement officer (HIO) will visit your home to look at its condition and to make sure the proposed alterations can be carried out.

For some major adaptations the council may employ a specialist surveyor to draw up plans and a specification of work. You will be involved in this process and will be kept informed of progress at each stage.

The HIO or specialist surveyor will produce a specification and technical drawings for the proposed work. You will be asked to confirm your agreement to the proposals, particularly where major work is proposed.

Some major works can take longer, for example if planning permission is needed and building regulations referred to.

On some occasions more than one contractor will need to visit to provide quotes for the work, for example two specialist contractors may be asked to quote for a curved, specially made stairlift.

The OT will normally provide you with initial recommendations within four weeks. Once a detailed design has been agreed the OT will draw up final recommendations and agree these with you.
Once we know the type and extent of the work required, we will request a tenancy check by the Tenancy Management Team.

If an adaptation includes work to common areas, such as improving the access to a building or block of flats, the housing office will need to consult with other residents.

The Tenancy Management Team may not allow the adaptation to go ahead if, for example:

- you are about to leave the property
- you are exercising your right to buy (RTB)
- you are on an introductory tenancy
- the adaptation is not considered to be reasonable or practicable

Once the Tenancy Management Team confirms that the work can go ahead, the Housing Adaptations Service will order an asbestos check. This check is a health and safety requirement to let us know if there is any asbestos in your home.

The HIO will arrange a home visit to carry out a final technical pre-inspection before ordering works.
Step 4 – Getting the work done

When the HIO has ordered the work, the contractor will make direct contact with you to arrange a start date. Sometimes the contractor will visit before the work starts to check they have everything they need and to answer any questions you might have.

It is important to us that the work is done properly and at a reasonable price. The council has a list of specially selected contractors to carry out major adaptations.

Sometimes the OT will need to change the recommended work if, for example, a particular material or piece of equipment is not available, or if your needs change. If this happens, the HIO and the OT will discuss this with you and work out the best solution.

The contractor cannot make any changes to the recommended work unless the HAS has agreed to the changes.

The HIO may arrange to visit you while work is being carried out to make sure that everything is going well for you.

If a major adaptation is needed it may not be safe for you to stay at home while the work takes place. In such cases, the council can arrange alternative, temporary accommodation for you. You can, of course, make your own arrangements if you prefer.
Step 5 – Work is completed

Once the work is completed, the OT will visit to check the adaptation fully meets the needs of the disabled person and that the work has been carried out to a satisfactory standard.

If there are any problems the contractor is required to put this right. The contractor is only paid when the HIO is sure that the work has been satisfactorily completed.

We will give you a customer satisfaction survey for your feedback – your views are important to us and help us to improve our service.

Warranties, service and maintenance of equipment

Adaptations are covered by a one year warranty. If equipment breaks down or an adaptation needs repair during this warranty period, you should contact the Housing Adaptation Service on 01273 292443.

Once the one year warranty has expired the council is responsible for the repair and servicing of equipment. You should report any repairs or faults to the council’s Repair Helpdesk on 0800 052 6140. If you call out the installer after the one year warranty has expired you may be liable for any charges incurred.

The council is responsible for the service and maintenance of equipment such as stair lifts, and a service contract is in place to carry out this work.
1. How long will it all take?

From the date you are referred to the Housing Adaptations Service for a specialist OT assessment, we aim to see you as quickly as possible and well within the guideline 12 weeks. For critical cases we aim to see you within two weeks.

Once we know the type of work that is needed, how complex it is, if planning permission is needed and building regulations referred to, etc, we can give you a better idea of how long work will take.

2. What if the OT says what I need can’t be done?

If it is not possible to adapt your home we will need to consider other options. These may include:

- an alternative adaptation
- a transfer to a more suitable property
- providing equipment which may help you cope in your current home

The OT will discuss these options with you.

3. Who can I contact to find out what’s happening?

Occupational Therapists and Home Improvement Officers are often out of the office visiting clients during the day.

If you need to speak to someone about your OT assessment, how long it takes or if your needs change, or about the work, when it will start, or any issues with the work once it’s started, please call 01273 292443.
4. What if I need a very simple, straightforward adaptation?

Some small adaptations such as grab rails, lever taps and window openers can be fitted without a referral from an OT. Call the Repairs Helpdesk on 0800 052 6140 and they will let you know if they can install the item you need.

If you think that you need an adaptation please contact the Access Point team:
- e-mail: accesspoint@brighton-hove.gov.uk
- phone: 01273 295555
- minicom: 01273 296388

contact the Repairs Helpdesk on 0800 052 6140. It is free to call this number.

6. If I live in sheltered housing and need my home adapted, who should I contact?

For sheltered housing tenants the process is the same, the first point of contact is Access Point and if you need a major housing adaptation you will be referred to the Housing Adaptations Service. If you need help contacting us at any point, your scheme manager may be able to help you with this and with arranging the home visits.

5. What happens if the equipment or adaptation needs to be repaired?

If equipment or adaptation needs to be repaired within the first year of being fitted you can contact us on 01273 292443. Adaptations are under warranty for one year after being installed.

For repairs to adaptations that are older than a year, please
Thank you to the Tenants Disability Network for its input in to the design and content of this leaflet.

Translation? Tick this box and take to any council office.

This can also be made available in large print, Braille, or on CD or audio tape.