



OXFORDSHIRE GRANT-AIDED

Home adaptations

bringing independence to people with disabilities who live in privately-owned or rented housing

In partnership with



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL



Listening Learning Leading



Oxford Health
NHS Foundation Trust



DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE



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Introduction

This booklet has been produced by Adult Social Care, NHS Children's Services and the five Oxfordshire district councils. It is a jointly-agreed approach setting out how the authorities will assist disabled service users and their carers carry out adaptations to their homes.



The bathroom with all its gadgets with my son in mind will make our life much easier when caring for him

Adaptations to your home

What help is available towards adapting my home?

If you have a disability and are a resident of Oxfordshire you may be eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). This is a mandatory grant to adapt your home to enable you to be more independent, for example by:

- making it easier to get into and out of your home
- making it easier to get to your bedroom, bathroom, living room, and kitchen
- making it easier to use the toilet, bath and/or shower
- making it easier to prepare and cook food
- improving or installing a suitable heating system
- helping you control lighting, power and heating
- making it easier to get around your home to help you care for another person
- helping you to make your home safer for you and your carer
- helping you to access your garden.



Grant-aid help has made a huge difference to my day to day life.

Important

This booklet is not a legal document. It does not cover every situation. If you are in doubt about your legal rights or responsibilities, you should seek independent advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau or a solicitor.



Applying for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

What is a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)?

Your local district council or city council may provide a DFG to help you pay for adapting your home so that you can live as independently as possible. The DFG is means-tested which means that your income and savings are assessed according to rules set out in government regulations. This means you may have to pay something towards the cost of the work. Your district/city council may have alternative grants/loans which are not means tested.

If you are not eligible for a DFG your district/city council can still help you arrange adaptations. They may charge a fee. You should contact them for further information.



Who can apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant?

Owner-occupiers, landlords and tenants can apply for a DFG. The DFG must be for a disabled person. The disability must be long-term and can be caused by physical illness or injury, a major sight, hearing, speech, or mental-health problem, or a learning disability. If you live in council housing, or your landlord is a housing association, you may be able to ask your landlord to carry out the adaptation work. A DFG may be available to adapt mobile homes and houseboats.

Discretionary grants or loans may be available to help you repair your property. You need to discuss this with your local council.

Can a child have a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)?

If you are a child or young person and have a disability, you are entitled to be assessed for a Disabled Facilities Grant which will **not** be means-tested.

How do I get a grant?

An Occupational Therapist from Adult Social Care or Children's Therapy Service will visit you at home to make an assessment of your needs. The Occupational Therapist will ask you about your disability and may need to consult with your doctor. They will make an assessment of how you carry out day to day activities. Following the assessment they will discuss the options for meeting your needs with you. These might include advice about equipment which may solve your difficulties without the need for alterations to your property, or the option of alternative accommodation. If they decide that an adaptation to your property is 'necessary and appropriate' to meet your needs they will send their recommendations to the district or city council.

An Occupational Therapist will visit your home and discuss options for meeting your needs with you

What will the district/city council do?

On receiving the recommendation from the Occupational Therapist the City/District Council or their agent will contact you. They will help you to complete a grant application form and may carry out a financial assessment (referred to as a test of resources) to see if you have to make a contribution towards the cost of the adaptations. The council may ask you to provide proof that you are the owner or tenant of the property. If the City/District Council believes the adaptation scheme is not 'reasonable and practicable' they can refuse a grant.

Your assessment may be completed by a trusted assessor, this is someone who is not a qualified Occupational Therapist but who has received training and works under supervision from an Occupational Therapist.

Who will be financially assessed?

If you are an adult you and your partner's income and savings may be taken into account as part of the means test.

If you are assessed to pay the whole cost of the adaptation work, you may still benefit by applying for what is known as a "nil grant". No money will be paid to you however the cost of the previous work can be taken into account if you need to adapt your home again within five years.

If you are child or young person eligible for child benefit you will not be means tested.

What if I can't afford my assessed contribution?

Other sources of funding may be available. Discuss this with your Occupational Therapist and City/District Council or their agent.





Can I start the work before the grant is approved?

No, you should not start any work on adapting your home until the grant has been fully approved and you have received written confirmation from your City/District Council. **Funding cannot be awarded once the work has started.**

Can I get any help with designing the adaptation work?

Usually your Occupational Therapist in conjunction with the City/District Council or their agent will help you to plan and design your adaptation and obtain prices. They will work closely with you to ensure that the proposed work will fully meet your needs.

If you choose to find someone else to plan the work for you, discuss this with your Occupational Therapist or City/District Council as their fees may be included in the cost of the works. However, if you are not awarded a grant you will be responsible for these fees.



What do I need to know if I am employing my own architect, surveyor, builder, or anyone else?

If you decide to use your own architect, architectural technician or surveyor, you should make sure that they are members of an appropriate professional organisation such as the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technicians, or the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. We recommend that they have previous experience of adapting homes for disabled people. The City/District Council may be able to give you information that helps you to select the right people.

Will I need planning permission or building regulations approval for the work?

You may need either or both. If an architect, surveyor or agency is working on your behalf they will be able to advise you about this. If in doubt you should contact the relevant department of your local council before starting any work.



How long will it take for the adaptation to be completed?

The time taken to complete the adaptation will vary depending on the type of work. Please discuss the time scale with your City/District Council or their agent.

Once the City/District Council has all the completed paperwork - the valid application, two quotations, and plans if needed – they must give you a written decision about a grant within six months.

Who pays for maintaining, repairing and insuring the adaptations?

If you are the owner of the property you will be responsible for maintaining, repairing, insuring, and removing the adaptations. The City/District Council or their agent can give you advice on maintenance and guarantees. You should check the guarantee period available to you, and should consider taking out a contract with the manufacturer to maintain equipment that needs regular servicing, such as home lifts, specialist toilets or baths.

If you live in rented accommodation you should check with your landlord whether they will take on any responsibility for service or maintenance of the adaptations in the future.

It is advisable to inform your household insurance company of works carried out so they can upgrade your insurance accordingly.



Who to contact:

To request an assessment

Adults

**Oxfordshire County Council
Social and Health Care Team**
PO Box 780, Oxford. OX1 9GX
Tel: 0345 050 7666
Fax: 01865 783111
socialandhealthcare@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Children

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust:

North Oxfordshire

Orchard Health Centre, Cope Road,
Banbury, OX16 2EZ
Tel: 01865 904435
northchildrens.therapies@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Central Oxfordshire

Cornwallis House, Cornwallis Road,
Oxford, OX4 3NH
Tel: 01865 904464
centralchildrens.therapies@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

South Oxfordshire

Abingdon Hospital, Marcham Road,
Abingdon, OX14 1AG
Tel: 01865 904 114
southchildrens.therapies@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

For information about grants

Cherwell District Council

Bodicote House
Bodicote, Banbury
Oxfordshire OX15 4AA
Tel: 01295 221658
www.cherwell.gov.uk

Oxford City Council Chambers, Home Improvement Agency

St Aldates Chambers,
109 St Aldate's,
Oxford OX1 1DS
www.oxford.gov.uk/hia
Tel: (01865) 252788

South Oxfordshire District Council

Environmental Health
135 Eastern Avenue
Milton Park
Abingdon
OX14 4SB
Tel: 01235 422403
www.southoxon.gov.uk

West Oxfordshire District Council

Elmfield
New Yatt Road
Witney
Oxfordshire OX28 1PB
Tel: 01993 861000
www.westoxon.gov.uk

Vale of White Horse District Council

Environmental Health
135 Eastern Avenue
Milton Park
Abingdon
OX14 4SB
Tel: 01235 422403
www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

More information

For information on equipment to help you to be independent at home see: 'Direct Access to Equipment' service: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/otequipment

You can find more information about the 'Disabled Facilities Grants on the Government website: www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants

This booklet has been jointly produced by all the partner agencies listed on the front cover.

We welcome any feedback or comments on this booklet. Please send these to the Social and Health Care Team. (Address above).