

Guide to Housing Options & Home Adaptations Information Sheet

As we get older, we may start to think more about where we live. Most of us will want to continue living independently in our own home for as long as possible, but it can become harder to manage due to health problems or a disability. It could be that the maintenance or repairs to your current home have become difficult or expensive for you to manage.

There are some changes you can make to your home to make it easier for you to continue living there, or you may want to consider moving to somewhere smaller, to a property which meets your needs better, or nearer to family/friends. This document gives you information about the different housing options available and the adaptations you can make to your home.

Housing Options

Where we live can have an impact on how comfortable we are, how easy it is to stay in touch with our family and friends, whether we can continue to participate in our social activities and get around to access community facilities such as shops. If you are no longer able to stay in your own home, or are choosing to move from your own home, there are several options you may want to consider.

Talking things through with family and friends can help you decide which option is best for you.

Moving in with Family

Moving in with family may be an option for you to consider and in many cases this works well. You will need to consider if your family's home is accessible and has sufficient space for your needs.

Buying a Property

If you already own your property, you may want to consider looking for an alternative property that suits your longer-term needs. You may want to move to be nearer to family or friends or you may want to consider a moving to a smaller property or a property on one level.

There are several financial considerations when buying a property, so you should seek appropriate independent advice/support to help you.

Renting a Property

You may be renting your current property and wanting to move to an alternative property, or you may have sold your property and are now looking for a property to rent. There are different ways to rent a property, so you should consider which option is best for you.

Private renting

The costs of privately renting and the availability of properties can vary depending on the area you want to live in. You can find properties for rent in newspapers, websites or through a letting agency.

You may want to consider applying to your local social landlord to see if they have properties which may be suitable for your needs. Councils and housing associations have an allocations policy which tells you if you are eligible to rent a property through them. Some registered social landlords have properties which have been adapted, or which may be more suitable for your needs.

In the first instance contact your local district or borough council to discuss the options.

If you are already a council or housing association tenant then you may be able to ask for a property swap, which could enable you to move to a more suitable property.

You may want to consider Extra Care or sheltered housing, which can allow you the freedom to have your own front door but with help available in an emergency. You can usually either buy or rent a property in one of these schemes.

Contact your district or borough council if you are interested in this type of scheme.

Further information

If you are having problems with your current home, this on-line tool can be used to identify the main difficulties and offer suggestions.

- Housing Options for Older People (HOOP) - hoop.eac.org.uk

This website has lots of resources about different housing options.

- Housing Care - housingcare.org

This website can provide advice and information on the different housing choices available as you get older, through their Housing Options Information Guide.

- Age UK - ageuk.org.uk

Adapting Your Home

Making some small changes to your home can increase your independence and allow you to continue living in your own home. Examples of these changes include:

- a grab rail at the front door to make getting in/out easier
- changes to the steps to the property to make accessing the property easier if you have problems with your mobility.
- a second stair rail to help you get up and down stairs safely
- a grab rail in the bathroom to make getting in/out of the bath easier
- rehanging a door or making a doorway wider to make it easier to get around your home

If you live in a council or housing association property you may be able to contact them directly to request minor adaptations, which they will provide at no cost to yourself.

If you want some help in deciding what adaptation would be best for you then you can visit the manage at home website manageathome.co.uk and complete a self-assessment. At the end of the assessment, recommendations will be made for your situation.

You could find your own tradesperson to provide any works that you may need. Derbyshire Trusted Trader scheme can help you find honest, reliable traders who commit to doing a good job for a fair price. You can find a Derbyshire Trusted Trader using the council's website: derbyshire.gov.uk/trusted-trader

Major Adaptations

You may need more substantial or major adaptations to your home to make it easier for you to continue living there.

If you need a major adaptation to your home, you may be eligible to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) to help towards the costs of the adaptation. A DFG is a means tested grant, which means that your income and savings, and those of your partner if you have one, are considered

when you make an application for a grant. The DFG can be used to provide a range of adaptations to your home, including:

- a wheelchair ramp or external wheelchair lift to make getting in/out of your home easier
- a stair lift or through-floor lift to help you access upstairs sleeping and washing facilities
- a level access or wet room shower to make washing easier
- a toilet that allows hands free cleaning
- wheelchair accessible kitchen facilities to support you to be independent with meal preparation

If you live in a local authority or housing association property you may want to contact them first as they may be able to complete the adaptation without the need for you to apply for a DFG.

A DFG is provided by the local district or borough council and they will work with you and partner agencies to establish what adaptations are necessary and appropriate to meet your needs.

The website adaptmyhome.org.uk allows you to complete a self-assessment to see what adaptations you may need. There is also a tool to help you decide if you want to stay in your current home.

You can use the means test calculator to help you understand if you would be eligible for a DFG.

Generally, you will need to have an assessment by an occupational therapist. The occupational therapist may be from Adult Social Care or from the hospital or community health team. If you would prefer you can arrange, and pay for, a private occupational therapy assessment.

If you decide to have an assessment from a private occupational therapist, make sure they are fully qualified and are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). You can see if your occupational therapist is registered by checking the HCPC online register - hcpc-uk.org/check-the-register.

The Royal College of Occupational Therapists has a website rcotss-ip.org.uk/find where you can search for a private occupational therapist in your area.

The district or borough council must be satisfied that the adaptations requested are necessary and appropriate to meet your need both now and in the foreseeable future. They will also consider if the works are reasonable and practicable given the age and condition of your property.

The maximum grant available is £30,000, but the amount of grant you will receive will depend on the cost of the work required and the outcome of your financial assessment.

If you are applying for a DFG, you can employ your own architect to draw up plans for you and arrange your own builders to complete the works as long as the district or borough council is satisfied with your arrangements and certain conditions are met. If you are unable to, or do not want to arrange the work yourself, Adult Social Care can support you through the process including arranging architects plans and commissioning the works required.

NB: A DFG cannot be paid retrospectively for work completed before a grant has been applied for and agreed.

Further information regarding Disabled Facilities Grants can be found on the government's website gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants.