
A DISABLED PERSON'S GUIDE

**TO ADAPTING YOUR
HOUSING EXECUTIVE
HOME**

Housing
Executive

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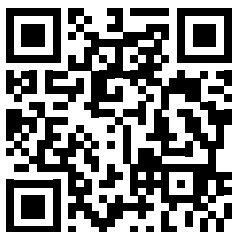
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This information is available on request in accessible formats, including but not limited to large print, audio formats, Braille and main minority ethnic languages.



For more information
scan this QR code.



INTRODUCTION

Disabled person adaptations for Housing Executive Homes

Housing plays a central role in maintaining the independence of disabled people enabling them to live safely within their own home. We understand that not all Housing Executive homes are accessible to a disabled person so as a tenant you may require an adaptation to enable you to continue to live independently or help you care for a member of your household.

Adaptations to your home are changes that can make it both safer and easier for you to move around the house. Many people assume that adaptations only relate to building works to install a wet room, a through the floor lift or extension, however, there are other adaptations which could allow you to continue to live independently for longer.

This booklet aims to give disabled tenants a general overview of the adaptation types available, how to get started and what steps are likely to be involved.



Adaptations can be divided into 3 categories. Each category will require different steps:

1. Minor adaptations that do NOT require assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT)
2. Minor adaptations that DO require assessment by an OT.
3. Major adaptations ALL require assessment by an OT.

If you are unsure which category the adaptation you require falls into, you can contact your Patch Manager and explain the nature of your difficulties and they will assist you further. Throughout this booklet we have given some examples of the most commonly requested adaptations in each category, other adaptation options may be available.

Useful Contacts/ Notes

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

Name_____

Contact number _____

REGIONAL WELFARE OFFICER

Name_____

Contact number _____

PROJECT MANAGER

Name_____

Contact number _____

CONTRACTOR

Name_____

Contact number _____

PATCH MANAGER

Name_____

Contact number _____



Minor Adaptations that do NOT require an OT Assessment

There is a list of minor work which may be carried out without recommendation by an OT. This work is managed by the local Area Office and carried out by the Housing Executive response maintenance contractor. If you have any queries regarding minor works, please contact your Maintenance Officer or Patch Manager in your local Housing Executive office.

The list includes items such as:

- Handrail at front or rear of dwelling or Housing Executive communal pathways
- Provision of whirly clothesline or path to clothesline
- Widening of garden paths for wheelchair users or persons with walking aids
- Defining the boundaries of your property such as steps for people with visual impairment
- Outdoor lighting for disabled clients with visual or mobility difficulties
- Paved areas for wheelchairs

- Additional continuous handrail to staircase (or other parts of dwelling if required)
- Changing doorknobs to lever handles as required
- Lowering of Yale Locks
- Re-siting of socket outlets or switches at a convenient level
- Provision of rocker light switches
- Provision of adequate internal lighting
- Relocation of clothes hanging rails
- Provision of letter cages or delivery shelves in entrance hall
- Provision of additional cupboards for storage
- Lowering of cooker mains switch
- Relocation of thermostat or heating controls
- Accessible window openings or, if not feasible, installation of extractor fan with accessible controls

- Provision of lever taps at wash basin in kitchen or bathroom.
- Replacement or re-siting of coal bunkers

For minor adaptations which do NOT require an OT assessment the Housing Executive can consider initial requests from all the following persons:

- The tenant or person acting on behalf of the tenant, including family, public representative, neighbours, and community groups.
- An appropriate Officer of the Housing Executive, generally Maintenance Officers or Patch Managers.
- Health and Social Services professionals involved in the case of persons with disabilities who reside in our housing stock.



CHECKLIST:

1. You or someone on your behalf have contacted your local Housing Executive office to request a Minor Adaptation which does NOT require an OT referral ☐
2. A Maintenance Officer has carried out visit to your property to assess feasibility of recommended works ☐
3. If no issues, works carried out by Response Maintenance Contractor ☐



Minor Adaptations that DO require an Occupational Therapy Assessment

There are several minor adaptations which require an assessment by a Health and Social Care Trust Community Occupational Therapist (OT) to determine the requirement for the adaptation. In their assessment the OT will establish what type of work is 'necessary and appropriate' to help you live independently or to help you care for someone in your household. The assessment will focus on your ability to carry out daily living tasks and identify any barriers within your home which may be impacting on your safety and independence. When the Area Office receives a request for this type of minor work from an OT, the work will be carried out by the Housing Executive's response maintenance contractors and will be managed by the local Area Office. If you have any queries regarding minor works, please contact your Maintenance Officer or Patch Manager at your local Housing Executive office.

The list includes items such as:

- A shower (bath out, shower in)
- An external ramp either at front or rear of property
- Widening of doors for wheelchair access
- Internal re-arrangement
- Lowering of kitchen worktops
- Repositioning of lights/sockets
- Additional toilet facilities
- Graduated steps
- Grabrails
- Hard-surfaced area for vehicle (Hardstanding)
- Provision of additional garden fencing to provide a secure outdoor area

CHECKLIST:

1. A referral has been made to your OT about your requirements and, where appropriate, your carer's requirements. ☐
2. A home assessment has been carried out by your OT to identify any barriers which impact on your safety and independence, and adaptation options have been discussed with you. ☐
3. An OT recommendation has been sent to the Area Office. ☐
4. A Maintenance Officer has carried out visit to your property to assess feasibility of recommended works. ☐
5. Approvals sought (where necessary) ie Building Control etc. ☐
6. If no issues, works carried out by Response Maintenance Contractor. ☐



Major Adaptations ALWAYS require an Occupational Therapy Assessment

Any Major Adaptation to your property will require assessment by an OT. This work will be provided by a specified contractor who will be employed by the Housing Executive and will be managed by our Asset Management Team and our Regional Welfare Officers. This work, due to its extensive nature, will take longer and will require more input from statutory agencies such as planning and building control.

The list includes adaptations such as:

- Ground floor extension to provide an accessible bedroom or bathroom.
- Vertical lift
- Stair-lift
- Major internal re-arrangement
- Provision of ground floor toilet.

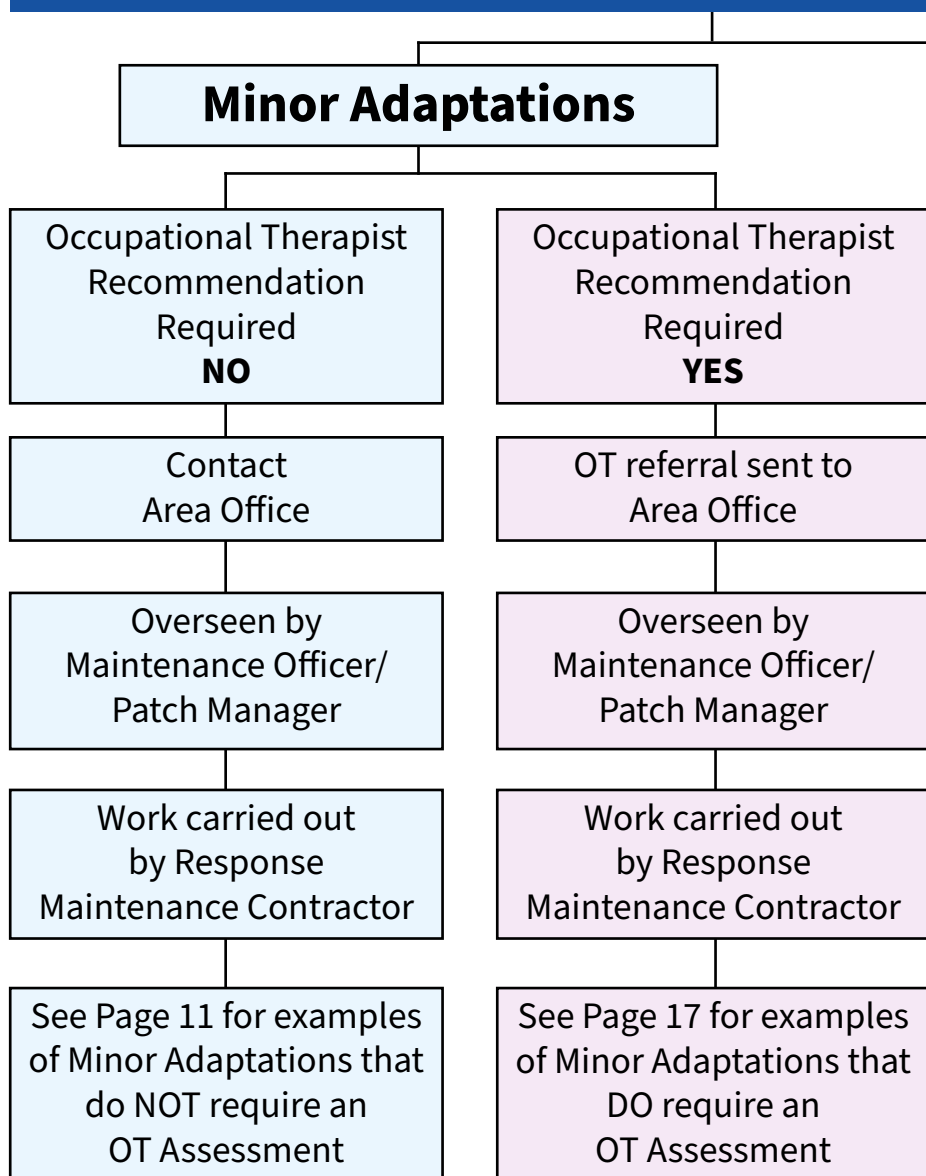
CHECKLIST:

1. A referral has been made to your OT about your requirements and, where appropriate, your carer's requirements. ☐
2. A home assessment has been carried out by your OT to identify any barriers which impact on your safety and independence, and adaptation options have been discussed with you. ☐
3. An OT recommendation has been sent to the Housing Executive Regional Welfare Officer. ☐
4. Your Regional Welfare Officer, Housing Executive Technical staff and your OT have all agreed with you the best way forward to address your specific requirements and allow you to continue to live independently. ☐
5. Formal working drawings have been drawn up and shared with you. ☐
6. Where it is essential, and in agreement with you, alternative temporary accommodation for the duration of the building works will have been identified and approved by you. ☐

- 7. You are aware of all the financial payments which you are entitled to. ☐
- 8. All necessary approvals including Planning and Building Control have been received. ☐
- 9. The Regional Manager has approved the work. ☐
- 10. You have a start date for the contractor to commence work. ☐
- 11. You understand the works that will be completed and have an indicative date for completion. ☐
- 12. On completion of the work, Housing Executive staff will advise the OT department and where necessary, the OT will visit to provide equipment such as a shower chair to help you use your new facilities. ☐

See pages 26 – 31 for a more in-depth description of the major adaptation process.

ADAPTING YOUR HOUSING EXECUTIVE HOME



ADAPTING YOUR HOUSING EXECUTIVE HOME

Major Adaptations

Occupational Therapist
Recommendation
Required
YES

OT referral sent to
Regional Welfare Officer

Overseen by
Asset
Management

Work carried out by
Specialist Contractor
on behalf of NIHE

See Page 21 for examples
of Major Adaptations
which ALL require an
OT Assessment

MAJOR ADAPTATIONS TO YOUR HOME

Major adaptations to your home are complex and the process will take longer than minor adaptations as more agencies are involved.

There are four main phases in the Major Adaptation Process:

FIRST PHASE

Your Occupational Therapy Referral.

The OT referral process in Northern Ireland is open to anyone who needs it, and referrals will be accepted from service users, carers, GP's and other healthcare staff.

Contact your local Health and Social Care Trust for more details.

SECOND PHASE

Your Occupational Therapy Assessment Process.

- When your referral is received and accepted, your OT will carry out an assessment, which will look at your ability to carry out everyday tasks, in order to determine the most appropriate service to address your requirements.
- During the OT assessment you may find it beneficial to have someone who is aware of your individual requirements in attendance to support you, this could be a family member, a friend or an elected representative.
- Following the assessment the OT will discuss the potential options available to you. These may include rehabilitation, referral to other Health and Social Services professionals, provision of daily living equipment or adapting your home.
- If adapting your home is an option, the OT will assess the layout of your property and suggest any necessary changes to help you with daily living or enable you to care for the disabled person.

- Adapting your property will involve changes or alterations designed to overcome barriers in the home such as steps, stairs, doorways etc. with the aim of providing a safe space to promote your independence.
- On some occasions where requirements are complex, more information may be needed from other Health and Social Services personnel to identify both short- and long-term requirements. This may involve contact with people such as your hospital consultant regarding your condition.
- The Occupational Therapist will also work with specialist equipment suppliers where this is a necessary part of the adaptation.

THIRD PHASE

Planning, Consultation and Approval.

The Regional Welfare Officer will receive your recommendation for the adaptation from the OT and will call with you to discuss the options available to you.

To help make decisions it may be necessary to undertake a technical survey at your property to decide whether the recommended works are technically feasible.

If the decision is made to proceed with the adaptation, an architect or other technical person will be asked to draw up sketch plans and these will be explained to you. The OT will also see the plans to ensure they meet your requirements.

Following this there will be a time where, although you may not have much contact with your Regional Welfare Officer, a lot of work is being done on your behalf. This is the period when sketch plans will be made into formal working drawings, the cost of the scheme will be worked out and statutory approvals such as Planning Permission and Building Control Approval will be applied for. Once all these details are known, the final decision for approval of your adaptation will be the responsibility of the Regional Manager, however, your Regional Welfare Officer will always be available to answer any queries you have on the progress during this stage.

At all times the Regional Welfare Officer will help you understand what is happening and you can contact



them at any point during the process. Sometimes, however, there are delays which are outside the control of the Housing Executive, for example, obtaining planning permission.

At the end of this stage the Housing Executive will appoint a contractor to carry out the work for you.

FOURTH PHASE

Building Works.

Following appointment, the contractor may visit you to discuss the nature of the work and a start date. As adaptations are tailored to individual requirements, each job may be different and involve different people. The Regional Welfare Officer can explain the role of these people.

Occasionally unexpected issues may arise during construction. If this happens the Regional Welfare Officer, Occupational Therapist and Architect will agree, in consultation with you, the best way to resolve the matter.

On completion of the work, Housing Executive staff will advise the OT department and where necessary, the OT will visit to provide equipment such as a shower chair to help you use your new facilities.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - MAJOR ADAPTATION

Question 1

Who is involved in the Major Adaptation process?

There are five main stakeholders in the Major Adaptation process:

1. Disabled person
2. Occupational Therapist (OT)
3. Housing Executive Regional Welfare Officer
4. Technical Staff
5. Contractor or builder

Disabled Person

The disabled person can be the tenant or a member of the tenant's household.

Occupational Therapists (OTs)

An assessment by a Health and Social Care Trust OT is needed to determine the requirement for a major adaptation. In their assessment the OT will establish what type of work is 'necessary and appropriate' to meet your requirements. The assessment will focus on your ability to carry out daily living tasks and identify any barriers within the home which may be impacting on your safety and independence.

The assessment will be carried out in a person-centered way, involving you in the decision-making process, to identify the best adaptation solution to address your requirements.

When the most appropriate solution has been identified for you and your family/carers, the OT will forward a recommendation to the Housing Executive who will determine the technical feasibility of the recommended works.

The Housing Executive Regional Welfare Officers

Once the recommendation is received from the OT, the Housing Executive Regional Welfare Officers will contact you to discuss arrangements and will coordinate what needs to be done to provide your major adaptation as recommended by the OT.

Technical Staff

Technical Staff draft sketch plans and final drawings, seek statutory approvals and provide specialist advice on technical and practical issues. This group will include people like architects, building surveyors and engineers.

Sometimes these people will be Housing Executive employees but on other occasions they may be engaged to work on your behalf as agents of the Housing Executive.

The Contractor or Builder

The Contractor or Builder will be engaged by the Housing Executive to complete the work required to your home.

Question 2

How long will my Major Adaptation take to be completed?

Even where everything goes relatively smoothly and according to plan without unforeseen circumstances, it can still take a substantial period of time from your initial assessment to completion of building work.

However, there is support and guidance available to you throughout the journey and clear milestones in the process.

Question 3

Will I need to move to another property to allow the works to be carried out?

In very specific cases where there are complex and major building works, you may be required to move from your home on a temporary basis to allow the major adaptation works to be completed safely. We will support you throughout this process. We will help you to find a suitable property. We will also help with moving out and returning when the works are complete.



Question 4

What if the recommended works are not feasible?

If the works recommended by your OT are not possible, for example, the property doesn't have the required space standards to allow for necessary work, the location of utilities are unsuitable or you live far away from relatives or friends it may make more sense to move house rather than carry out a major adaptation.

In these circumstances you may be eligible to apply for a transfer to alternative more suitable social housing. This option may be discussed but your wishes will be taken into account and every effort will be made to agree an acceptable alternative option to adaptation.

Calls are welcomed via **Relay UK** which provides a service for those who are deaf, hearing or speech impaired to access any services that are available on standard telephone systems. You can access this by contacting **18001 03448 920 900**.

You can also request an adaptation to your home from the 'My Housing Executive Portal'.

This information can also be made available in alternative formats, to request, please contact:

Northern Ireland Housing Executive
The Housing Centre
2 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8PB

03448 920 900

Or scan QR code on Page 3 of this leaflet

Translation services are also available via a telephone service called Language Line available in each Housing Executive Office.

Accessible Formats

Visual impairments – audio, audio description, Braille, Moon, telephone

Learning disabilities and literacy difficulties – audio, audio description, easy read, easy access, Makaton, subtitles

Hearing – British Sign Language, Irish Sign Language, Makaton, subtitling, textphone, SMS

Co-ordination difficulties – large print, audio, audio description, telephone

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