

Accessible Homes

Making homes work for older and disabled people in Bristol

Adapting your home



What are adaptations?

Adaptations are alterations to your home to make it safer and more manageable for you, for your disabled child, or for a carer. They can be:

- Small alterations for example, hand rails and grab rails.
- Major changes including, a stairlift, a shower instead of a bath, or changes to the layout of your home.

When will the adaptations be carried out?

- Firstly, we provide equipment and/or minor adaptations as these may solve your problems. This can be done quickly and easily.
- Then we will help you look at the possibility of moving home, in some cases this may be a better solution.
- Finally, we will discuss adapting your home. Together we will look at whether this will significantly improve the quality of day to day living for you and/or your carer.

This leaflet shows what adaptations are available and what we can fund.

Who does the work?

In Accessible Homes we have our own surveyors and use a small number of skilled technicians and contractors. They work closely with our occupational therapists to tailor the work to your needs. As a team we will work with you to help you decide the most appropriate solutions.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF ADAPTATIONS

Washing, bathing and toilets

Help with washing and bathing is the most common request we receive and demand increases every year. We know how important it is to keep clean, especially if you have certain medical conditions. A lot of people ask for a shower, but this is not the only answer and will not always be the best solution for your needs.

Equipment first

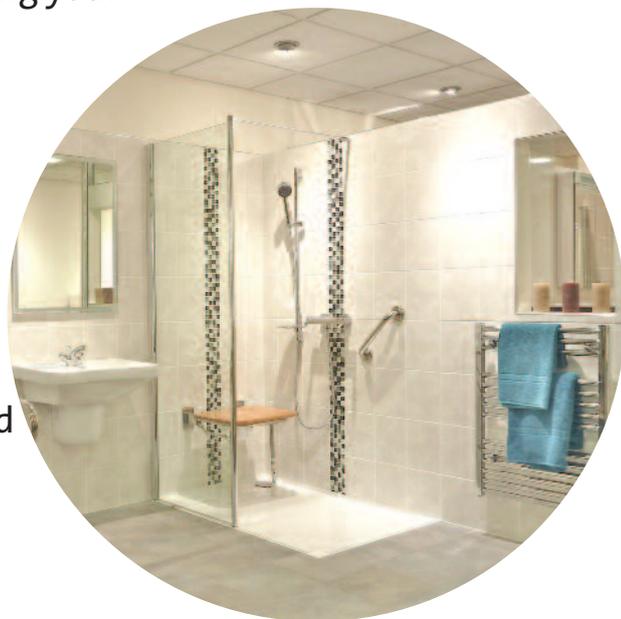
If you can continue to safely and independently wash using your current facilities with some equipment, this will be the preferred solution. Many people are not aware of the range of equipment available. We ask people who are able to travel to come to our specialist centre so that you can see equipment and try it out.

Alterations to your bathroom – who can we help?

If you cannot safely and independently wash using your current facilities the following solutions will be considered:

1. An over bath shower
2. A shower enclosure
3. Level access or wet floor shower

Options 2 and 3 will only be provided if your needs cannot be met by a simpler solution. We will also look at the ability of your carer to assist you in a way that is safe. We may also need written confirmation of your medical condition and its affects from your doctor or other medical practitioner.



Showers will be provided if:

- You need a shower to manage an unpredictable medical condition eg, double incontinence, uncontrolled epilepsy or seriously challenging behaviour.
- You have a degenerative, congenital, or chronic condition where there is significant deterioration, you are unable to maintain personal hygiene without help or there is risk of a deformity developing.
- You are a permanent wheelchair user (or likely to be so in the foreseeable future) and there is inadequate space for wheelchair access or transfer.
- A ceiling track hoist is needed to give access to the bath/shower and a changing table.
- You are a carer at high risk of injury and a shower is the only way to help the person you care for maintain personal hygiene.

All other requests will be decided on a case by case basis eg, you might require a bath in place of a shower to manage a medical condition. If you wish to pay for additional facilities over and above a scheme proposed by Bristol City Council this can be arranged.

Toilets

An adapted toilet

This may be provided if you are unable to manage your own toilet hygiene independently with the existing facilities and require help from a carer. We will usually look at installing a bidet first rather than providing a special toilet with washing and drying facilities.

An additional toilet and wash hand basin

This may be provided if the only toilet you can use is on the ground floor but your bedroom is upstairs and you are unable to safely use the stairs at night. Your doctor may be asked to confirm your needs.

Provision of a ground floor bathroom, toilet or bedroom

These types of major adaptations can cause a lot of disruption, noise and dust. You may even have to move out while the work takes place. Before providing additional rooms we would look at all the options with you first, including moving. Sometimes moving is easier and will be a better solution.

A ground floor bathroom, bedroom and/or toilet may be provided if:

- You have looked at moving but it was not possible because:
- a suitable property was not available in a reasonable time
- you had made a lot of improvements to your current property
- you would lose local support networks
- Existing rooms on upper floor levels cannot be reasonably adapted to make them suitable for safe use.
- You have a deteriorating condition which means that ground floor rooms would meet your future needs better than adapting the first floor.
- You are unable to use a lift (stair lift or through lift) safely, it is not structurally feasible to provide a lift, or a lift would restrict manoeuvring.

Creating an accessible ground floor bedroom and/or bathroom will usually involve adapting existing rooms - including a second reception room. Providing additional rooms by building an extension will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. The additional space must directly relate to meeting your needs not for solving problems of overcrowding.

Note: In council and housing association properties work will not go ahead if it would result in difficulty re-letting the property when you leave.

Access to your home

Ramps and steps

To decide whether ramps or steps are the best solution we will look at your mobility, your use of walking aids and the ability of your carer to assist you.

We will install ramps if:

- You are permanently in a wheelchair (or are likely to be in the near future) and you are eligible for a wheelchair by the National Health Service.
- You care for a child who uses a NHS wheeled mobility aid. Ramps will usually be permanent, but semi-permanent or portable ramps may be used if:
 - You are terminally ill
 - To enable you to be discharged from hospital
 - Where your mobility may significantly improve, for example with a prosthesis.



Ramps need to meet building regulation requirements.

If you use a wheelchair, but are able to walk short distances, shallow steps to the home may be more appropriate.

Mobility scooters

Ramps cannot be provided for electric scooters except in exceptional circumstances. Charging and storage of your scooter is your responsibility and will not be covered by a grant.

External lift

This may be appropriate if it is not practical to provide ramps or steps. Planning permission may be required even if your property is not a listed building or is outside a conservation area.

Widen or alter internal or external doors

Alterations to doorways may be possible if:

- You are a permanent wheelchair user and the doorways need to be widened to allow wheelchair access.
- You have severely restricted mobility and alterations will provide better access and safety.
- An additional doorway is essential and the only option possible to create level access to the property.

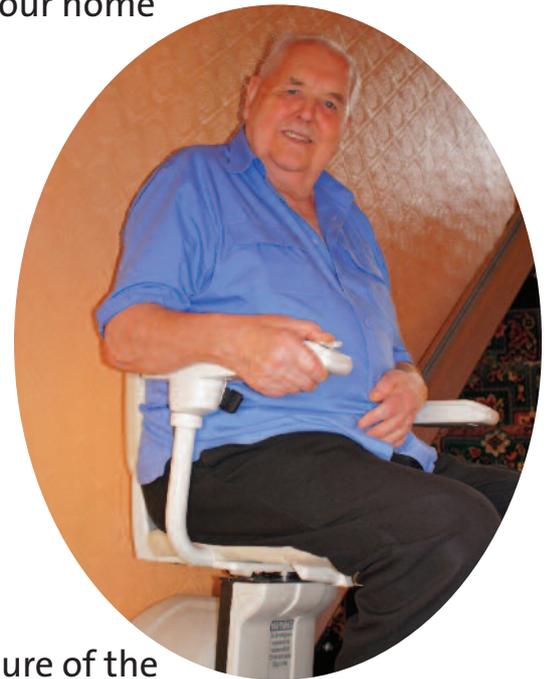
Door opening systems

These may be provided if you are unable to safely open and close doors in order to access your home or enter essential areas within your home such as the living room, bedroom and bathroom.

Stairlift or through floor lift

It is important to see if your abilities would improve through rehabilitation before considering a lift. We may provide a lift if:

- Your mobility is so severely restricted that it is virtually impossible for you to get up or down the stairs without risk to you, your family or carer.
- You have a history of falls on the stairs
- A through floor lift will be considered if you are unable to safely transfer to and from a stair lift or your condition is likely to deteriorate.
- A through floor lift will be considered if the structure of the staircase means that it is not possible to safely install a stairlift.



Kitchen adaptations

Adaptations to your kitchen may be provided if:

- You have the ability to prepare and cook food and you have the primary responsibility for cooking for yourself and others in the household. Your kitchen must be totally inaccessible to you or unusable by you, but structurally feasible to adapt.
- Specific adaptations are needed for safety reasons eg, due to a medical condition or because of behaviour.
- You are caring for a child who is likely to go on to live independently.

Kitchen facilities:

- Existing kitchen cupboards, fittings and appliances will be re-used wherever possible.
- You will have to find and pay for any new appliances.
- The only exception is when appliances need to have specific features to meet your needs, but this may be solved by moving an existing appliance eg, placing an oven at a higher level.

Requests for adaptations will not be accepted if your kitchen is simply old or does not have enough units.

If your kitchen cannot be adapted an alternative facility for preparing a hot drink plus a shelf for a microwave may be provided in another area of the home.

Heating

We will look at your heating needs. You may just need additional heaters not linked to the existing heating system. We aim to provide heating in the rooms you use plus your bedroom and bathroom/shower room - not necessarily all the rooms in your home. We are not able to provide heating on the upper floors if you only use the ground floor. We will make changes to the heating or heating control system if:

- You have a specific medical condition which severely affects your body temperature or which would be made worse by an uneven or low room temperature. Your doctor may be asked to confirm your needs in writing.
- You have severe loss of sensation directly due to your medical condition. Your doctor may be asked to confirm your needs in writing.
- You are unable to safely use the existing heating controls and require non standard controls.

If you are eligible for an energy efficiency scheme you will be referred on to the appropriate service.

If you wish, you may be able to pay the difference between what Bristol City Council will pay and the cost of installation of a full heating system.

Safety

For people with a sensory impairment an enhanced alarm system or upgraded artificial lighting can improve safety.

Most work relating to safety in the home involves disabled children with challenging behaviours. In such cases the following principles apply:

- The adaptation must be for the disabled child and not for the safety of a non-disabled child of that age.
- Safety measures can include guards or covers around items such as fires or radiators, shatterproof glass at relevant locations, and cladding of wall surfaces and corners to prevent injury.
- In exceptional circumstances safety works can be provided in the back garden normally a 5x5 metre enclosed space with a turfed surface. Safety surfaces will not usually be provided as it is expected that children in this area will be supervised by parents or other responsible person(s) at all times.

Hard-standing and driveways

We would aim to mark out a parking bay on the road before any hard-standing is provided in the garden. Enclosing part of the garden or providing hard-standing or driveways will be provided when:

- Transferring from the car to wheelchair or walking aids on the street has been assessed as a hazard.
- You care for someone with severe challenging behaviour who lacks an awareness of their own personal safety and there is a significant risk of injury to them during the transfer from the car to the home.

Access to the garden

- Adaptations will provide access to a modest area of garden (under 6 square metres) with room for a rotary washing line, not the whole garden.
- We will provide one route to the rear garden, whatever is the easiest to provide. It may not always be the most direct route, but should not be too difficult for you to use.

Adaptations in communal areas

- Adaptations in communal areas will require your landlords consent and support from other residents affected.
- A stairlift in a shared stairwell cannot be installed unless Building Regulation and Health and Safety requirements can be met. If it does not meet these requirements it is unlikely that other works inside your home can go ahead. Instead we will see if we can help you to move.
- Other work which may not be allowed includes alterations to shared door entry systems and ramps up to the main entrance of a building containing more than one home.

Paying for Adaptations

Paying for all work yourself

Some people prefer to arrange and pay for adaptations themselves rather than wait in a queue for funding to be provided by the council. Help can be given by West of England Care & Repair or Living, (details on page 10). If you live in a rented home you will need to get your landlord's consent for any works to proceed.

Paying for additional work yourself

You may have a plan that you feel is better than the one proposed by the City Council. If this will meet your needs the City Council may contribute their share of the costs, however:

- You may need to complete a Disabled Facilities Grant application even if you are a tenant
- Any additional costs and associated professional fees have to be paid by you
- Your financial commitments will have to be paid before you can receive funds from the Council
- You will have to find your own builders, get consents and oversee the work. However, we can help you find an agent to do this
- We will make a final inspection of the completed scheme to ensure it meets your needs
- If you rent your home your landlord's consent will be needed before the works can start.

Grants

Grants for adaptations:

- Disabled Facilities Grant – to apply you will need to complete some paperwork and you may have to undergo a financial assessment. We can help you with this.
- If the work costs over £5,000 the grant may have to be paid back if your property is sold within 10 years. The maximum amount you would have to pay is £10,000 even if the work cost more than this.
- Bristol also offers some other types of grant for lower cost cases.

Grants for moving:

- If you move home there may be some help with the costs.
- If you are a Council or Housing Association tenant and move to a smaller home you may be eligible for a payment.

Loans

The city council works with an independent organisation to offer low cost loans.

- A loan may be needed if the cost of adaptations to your home is more than £30,000 - the maximum the Disabled Facilities Grant.
- Loans are only available for owner occupiers with enough equity in their property.
- In some cases if you cannot afford a loan the City Council may provide the additional funding required.

Voluntary donations

As most disabled people are on low incomes the majority of customers who receive a grant do not have to make any contribution from their own funds.

- Some customers have said that they would like to make a donation towards the cost once the work is satisfactorily completed.
- Donations are now possible and are welcomed. It is up to you whether you want to make a contribution, and if so, how much.
- Donations will make a big difference to the service as we will be able to help more people. Please ask about how to make a contribution.

Service Standards

Most people are judged to be standard priority, but you will be classed as high priority if:

- You are terminally ill
- There is a breakdown of your care arrangements
- There is evidence of rapid deterioration
- There is risk of physical injury to you or your carer
- You cannot be discharged from hospital without alterations to your home

Your first point of contact

Disabled Adults	Bristol Care Direct 0117 922 2700
Disabled Children	Disabled Children's Service 0117 903 8250
Housing Association tenants	Please contact your landlord
Home Choice Bristol	0117 922 2400

Do you want to organise moving home yourself?

West of England Care and Repair 0117 954 2222
www.wecr.org.uk
They provide support with rehousing whether you own or rent your home.

WEBSITES:

www.bristol.gov.uk
www.homechoicebristol.co.uk

www.wellaware.org.uk A useful website which is a guide to health, wellbeing and community services in Bristol and surrounding area

Also see our other leaflets:

- Helping you move home
- Our service

If English is not your first language and you need a translation, we can get one for you.

ALBANIAN

Nëse anglishtja nuk është gjuha juaj amtare dhe keni nevojë për një përkthim, ne mund t'ua sigurojmë atë.

BENGALI

ইংরেজী আপনার মাতৃভাষা না হলে এবং আপনার কোন অনুবাদের প্রয়োজন হলে আমরা তা প্রদান করতে সক্ষম।

CHINESE

如果英文不是您的第一語言，而您需要翻譯的話，我們可以為您安排。

GUJARATI

જો તમારી પહેલી ભાષા અંગ્રેજી ન હોય અને તમને ભાષાંતરની જરૂર હોય તો અમે તમને તે આપી શકીએ છીએ.

HINDI

यदि अँग्रेज़ी आप की पहली भाषा नहीं है और आप को अनुवाद की आवश्यकता है तो यह हम आपको प्रदान कर सकते हैं

KURDISH

Heke îngilîzî zimanê we yê yekem nîne û pêwîstîya we bi wergêr heye, em dikarin yekî ji we re bibînin

POLISH

Jeżeli język angielski nie jest Twoim językiem ojczystym i wymagasz tłumaczenia, możemy to zapewnić.

PORTUGUESE

Se o Inglês não é a sua língua materna e precisa de uma tradução, nós podemos obtê-la.

PUNJABI

ਜੇਕਰ ਇੰਗਲਿਸ਼ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

SOMALI

Haddii Ingiriisku aanu ahayn afkaaga kowaad oo aad u baahan tahay turjumaad, annagaa kuu samayn karra.

URDU

اگر انگریزی آپ کی پہلی زبان نہیں ہے اور آپ کو ترجمہ کی ضرورت ہے تو ہم آپ کے لئے فراہم کر سکتے ہیں۔

VIETNAMESE

Nếu quý vị không thạo Anh văn và cần bản dịch, chúng tôi sẽ giúp quý vị một bản.

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