



Bristol City Council – Growth and Regeneration and
Care and Support Adults

Accessible Homes Policy and Process

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Author	Sarah Hooper/Sheila Mackintosh, Housing Consultant
Contact	Sheila Mackintosh
Responsibility	Sarah Hooper/Accessible Homes

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Introduction

In Bristol many homes have physical barriers such as stepped entrances, inaccessible bathrooms, or steep internal stairs. These restrict people's lives and can lead to falls and accidents. They prevent people doing basic activities, such as getting in and out of the front door, washing, cooking, or caring for a family member.

Accessible Homes helps people modify their homes to make it easier for them to get around, manage daily activities, and provide care for others.

We supply equipment and new technology solutions and deliver a range of minor and major adaptations. These include rails, ramping solutions, accessible showers, stairlifts, and other changes.

If the current home is not suitable to adapt, we also provide advice and support with moving to a more suitable property.

Accessible Homes Policy

1. Aims and objectives

A suitable, well adapted home can be the defining factor in enabling a person to live well. The aim of Accessible Homes is to help people live independent and dignified lives and ensure that those who care for others can do this easily and safely.

The desired outcomes are to:

- Increase years of independence
- Make the home safe and reduce the risk and fear of falling
- Prevent hospital or residential care admission
- Allow faster hospital discharge and make reablement after a hospital stay more effective
- Improve personal wellbeing and satisfaction with life.

However, financial constraints mean that help with home adaptations must be delivered in the most effective way to make best use of resources. We aim to offer as fast a service as possible, but priority is given to the most urgent cases.

2. Policy statement

The local authority has a legal duty to assess and identify the needs of residents in Bristol who have difficulty getting around their homes and performing daily activities.

We aim to provide information so that people can make informed choices to remain living independently, safely and with dignity for as long as possible. We can assist with a variety of solutions to meet those needs:

- Supplying equipment and/or minor adaptations
- Technology Enabled Care solutions
- Assistance to move to another property
- Major adaptations to the existing home

When considering the best way to meet needs we always consider:

- Other relevant policies including Making Best Use of Stock (Council Tenants)
- Principles of value for money to ensure the budget can help the maximum number of people
- Using space within the property before providing any additional area outside of the existing home.

Going ahead with work without support - some people prefer to arrange and pay for adaptations themselves rather than wait for funding to be provided by us.

If you are a council tenant you can pay for the work yourself but you will need to contact your housing officer to obtain permission before starting work.

We can provide advice and there is also a list of useful sources of information and local services at the end of this document.

3. Scope

The Accessible Homes service is for people of all ages, including:

- Families with disabled children
- People of working age
- Those over retirement age

The service covers all tenures:

- Council tenants
- Private rented tenants
- Housing association tenants
- People who own their own home or who are buying their home with a mortgage.

Bristol has a multi-ethnic population. We will discuss any cultural and religious beliefs that may affect either the adaptation of the home or a move to a new property. We do our best to accommodate these needs within legislative and budgetary constraints.

4. Priority cases

At times of high demand there may be a longer wait for an assessment. People classed as high risk get priority, all others are classed as standard risk.

People at high risk who get priority include those with:

- Limited life expectancy (up to a year)
- Recent and rapid deterioration in health condition
- Breakdown of care, or carers unable to continue
- High and immediate risk of injury to the person or their carer
- Unable to be discharged from hospital without alterations to the home.

5. Eligibility

Eligibility for assessment and support varies because each part of the home adaptations process operates under separate sets of legislation. However, the assessment principles and the equipment and adaptations people receive are the same for all tenures.

Minor adaptations, equipment and home Technology Enabled Care (TEC) for adults – eligibility is governed by the Care Act 2014.

Major adaptations – the Disabled Facilities Grant, and use of the HRA for council tenants, operate under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. Eligibility is different to the Care Act 2014. In 2002 the government brought in the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 which was extended in 2008. This gives the authority some discretion and enables Accessible Homes to provide a limited amount of Discretionary Adaptations Assistance.

Equipment, home TEC and home adaptations for children – are also covered by the Children Act 1989 and the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. There is no means test for a Disabled Facilities Grant for a disabled child or young person.

People should contact Care Direct, or the Disabled Children's Service, to find out if they are eligible for support.

Housing association tenants - may be able to get help with some adaptations to their home direct from their landlord. Housing association residents should call their landlord first before contacting Care Direct.

For people who are not eligible - Care Direct can provide advice and signpost to other organisations which may be able to assist. There is a list of other organisations that provide information and practical support at the end of this document.

Further details about the legislation and guidance that underpin our policies and that determine a person's eligibility for assistance are given in Appendix A.

6. Equipment, minor adaptations and Home TEC

Equipment and minor adaptations – are always considered first to see if they will meet people's needs without further work to the home. They are normally products and fittings that cost under £1,500.

Equipment and minor adaptations include:

- Chair/sofa/bed raisers
- Stair rails
- External hand rails
- Shower seats
- Grab rails
- Drop down rails
- Key safes
- Lever taps
- Additional electrical sockets for medical equipment
- Concrete half steps
- Concrete platforms
- Concrete ramping
- Modular ramping

Home TEC Hub - Accessible Homes also provides home technology for adults who are eligible and referred by adult social care. This is to prevent hospital admission, allow return home after a hospital stay, or as an alternative to traditional care support.

Technology Enabled Care includes:

- A personal alarm to call for help e.g. if someone falls
- Equipment and technology to help with hearing or sight loss
- Technology that assists with the tasks of daily living
- Sensors to help with dementia
- Systems to allow a carer or support worker to keep in touch remotely.

7. Moving versus adapting the home

We recognise that moving can be a difficult decision for someone who has a disability, a long-term health condition, or has lived in their home for a long time. However, moving can often provide a more suitable home and help people remain independent.

Home owners, private tenants and housing association residents

The policy is to discuss the possibility of moving early in the process before people begin the wait for home adaptations. Accessible Homes can talk about options, and provide advice, information and links to other useful services.

Moving may be the better option if:

- The home is too big
- It is overcrowded
- Adaptations are not feasible given the age, condition or nature of the home
- The home needs major structural changes or an extension, especially if the cost will go over the upper limit for a Disabled Facilities Grant (currently £30,000)
- The person cannot access a significant portion of the living space
- It is above the ground floor with no lift and it is not possible to install one
- The home is unable to meet long term care needs that might be better provided in ground floor accommodation, a sheltered home or extra care housing.

Council tenants

Accessible Homes is guided by the Homes and Landlord Services 'Making Best Use of Stock Policy' (MBUS). There are already a lot of council owned accessible and adapted homes in the city. The option to move home will be explored before thinking about adaptations.

Once all alternative options have been explored and there are supported grounds for council tenants staying in the same home rather than moving, Accessible Homes will then undertake to adapt the property and will organise and oversee the work.

Adaptations will be put on hold if there are breaches of tenancy such as rent arrears or an eviction notice. The case will be reactivated when we are advised by Estate Management any breaches have been resolved.

Moving will be the preferred option for council tenants in the following circumstances:

- **People in homes with two spare bedrooms** - the reason for this policy is that there may be homes available that will meet people's needs much better than their current home. Many smaller properties in the city have already been adapted and there is also a lot of specialised housing. The council does not want to adapt any more properties until the option to move has been explored. There is also high demand for family homes and if smaller households relocate it frees larger homes for people on the housing waiting list.

- **Where a tenant requires level access** - rehousing to a level access property will be the preferred option rather than trying to adapt the current home.
- **Where bathing adaptations are requested to a flat on the first floor or above that is not served by passenger lift** - removing a bath and installing a level access shower/wet room will only be made if the customer can manage the entrance-ways, internal circulation space and staircases safely in the short to medium term. This is due to fire safety regulations.
- **If someone cannot manage the stairs to a flat on the first floor or above that is not served by passenger lift** - it is the council's policy not to install stair lifts in the common parts of a property.
- **If a household is overcrowded** - the property will not be adapted unless the tenant is registered on Home Choice or Mutual Exchange and has been actively placing bids for more suitable properties. In cases where there is a shortage of suitable homes and long waits for rehousing, home adaptations may be explored at the same time.
- **Property is assessed to be not possible to adapt** - due to age or construction type and level of adaptations needed for the household.

Support with moving

Accessible Homes may be able to provide some support with the costs of moving to more suitable accommodation when discretionary funding is available (see Financial Assistance Policy).

There is also support for council tenants with the processes of registering and bidding for alternative properties on the Home Choice system.

8. The Disabled Facilities Grant

The Disabled Facilities Grant is the main source of funding for major home adaptations for home owners, private tenants, and housing association residents.

Funding for council tenants is not from the Disabled Facilities Grant, it comes from the Housing Revenue Account. However, the work carried out is the same and the process similar, although there is no test of resources.

The most common requests relate to washing and bathing. Disabled Facilities Grant adaptations include:

- Stair lifts and through floor lifts
- Ramps, rails and step lifts

- Door widening for wheelchair access
- Redesign of kitchens to be wheelchair accessible
- Level access showers and other bathroom alterations such as raising the toilet
- Access to some of the garden
- Other works to reduce risks in the home.

Most work carried out using this funding costs under £10,000. Where extensive work is needed the upper limit is currently £30,000. Anything above £30,000 will need additional funding from other sources.

Eligibility for Disabled Facilities Grant assistance

An individual will be considered eligible for assistance if they:

- Are eligible to live in the UK
- Are a resident within the Bristol City Council boundary
- Have a disability or long-term illness that will last 12 months or more,
 - or provide care for an adult or child with a disability who is resident in Bristol
 - or care for a child not resident in Bristol where the Council has parental responsibility
- Provide proof of property ownership and consent from any joint owner, or proof that they are a tenant of the council, housing association or private landlord
- Intend to stay in the present home for the next ten years (unless they are being helped to move to a more suitable property)
- Are moving into the area at the request of another Council due to a social or legal requirement.

They will not be eligible if they:

- Do not intend to remain in their present home; are thinking of moving, or the home is currently on the market to be sold.
- The Right to Buy process has been started.
- Are in a rented property and have rent arrears, are in risk of losing their tenancy, a notice has been served, or enforcement action taken - unless they are fully engaged with support services to resolve the issues.

Test of resources for the Disabled Facilities Grant

- **Families with disabled children and young people aged under 18** – there is no test of resources, but applicants will be required to fill in some of the paperwork so that we have up to date family information.
- **People on certain benefits** - do not go through the full test of resources.
- **There is usually a test of resources for all other adults aged 18 and over.** This looks at income, savings and other capital to calculate any contribution that would have to be made and how much grant a person will receive.

Notification of approval and grant/loan payments

The following provisions are in place to help the local authority manage Disabled Facilities grant resources and will be discussed with grant applicants in advance:

- **The local authority must notify a grant applicant no later than six months after the date of the valid application being made** to let them know whether the application is approved or refused (Section 34 of the 1996 Act).
- **The local authority is allowed to defer payment of the adaptation** for up to twelve months from the date when a valid application was made (Section 36 of the 1996 Act).
- **Work must NOT start before the grant is approved** as this can invalidate the grant application.
- **Grant payments will be made to the grant applicant or contractor on completion of works.** Stage payments can be agreed on bigger schemes that can be made during the course of the works. These will be agreed and signed off by the grant officer.

Repaying the grant

For home owners only - Disabled Facilities Grants above £5,000 will be registered with the local land registry and if the property is sold within ten years of the works being completed the grant must be re- paid. The maximum repayment is £10,000 even if the grant was for more.

9. Additional sources of funding

Discretionary Adaptation Assistance - can sometimes be provided if the Disabled Facilities Grant is not enough to cover all the eligible scheme of works, or a property needs work that is not covered by the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant.

These grants are only available if annual budgets allow and are only for home owners and private tenants. Annual budgets will set out the amount available. They are normally used to:

- Make a home safe for someone discharged from hospital
- Clean and clear a home prior to further adaptation work
- Get work done quickly for a terminally ill patient.

Housing Associations - if additional funding is needed for Housing Associations tenants, there will be discussion with the relevant landlord.

10. Loans

Loans for home owners and private landlords – these may be needed if the grant amount approved does not cover the full cost of the eligible scheme of work, or if the cost exceeds the upper limit of £30,000.

Loans are available to both home owners and private landlords with enough equity in their property.

Applicants will be assessed by our partner **Lendology** and will be offered a loan product to suit their financial circumstances.

Loan fund assistance will only be released to the applicant, or their representative, when works have started on site.

11. Appeals process

If there are issues with the OT assessment, the Disabled Facilities Grant, or adaptations in council homes, people should contact us via Care Direct and we will work to resolve the issues.

If you are not satisfied by the needs identified by the OT or the recommendations for how needs can be met by a technical officer and OT, we will work with you to reach a resolution. Where this cannot be achieved a senior officer will be asked to review your case.

If adaptations in the council stock are refused, the tenant must explain why they are unable to move and provide medical evidence. Should a council resident have an adaptation refused in line with the Making Best Use of Stock policy, they have three months from their refusal date to appeal this decision and their case will be reviewed by the Head of Estates Services and one other experienced Manager/health professional from another team within the Directorate or Children's Services. If the Head of Estate Services is absent, two experienced Managers/health professionals from within the Directorate or Children's Services will review the appeal. Appeals will be heard within a month of submission and the tenant will be informed of the outcome of the appeal within one month of the appeal hearing This will be considered by the Head of Estate Services.

Accessible Homes Process

1. Making contact

The first point of contact is Care Direct or the Disabled Children's Service. People can call themselves, or someone else can refer or call on their behalf. People will be asked for their contact details, housing information and the reasons they need help.

Care Direct - Adult services

- Telephone: 0117 922 2700
- Email: adult.care@bristol.gov.uk

Disabled Children's Service

- Telephone: 0117 903 8250
- Email: disabledchildren@bristol.gov.uk

There are also online referral forms for:

- External professionals
 - Members of the public needing home adaptations and equipment
- <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/home-adaptations-and-equipment>

Housing association tenants

Residents who only need minor adaptations should contact their landlord first as most can assist with this work.

Care Direct and the Disabled Children's Service will usually refer people to Accessible Homes or the TEC Hub.

2. Accessible Homes and the TEC Hub – about the service

Accessible Homes is a specialised interdisciplinary service that bridges housing, health, adult social care and children's services. Its aim is to help families with disabled children and disabled and older people make physical changes to their home.

Accessible Homes has a team of skilled staff which includes:

- **Specialist occupational therapists and occupational therapy aides** – they assess people's current health and housing situation, their equipment and adaptation options, and help define solutions that will meet people's housing needs both in the short and longer term.

The Accessible Homes in-house occupational therapists work closely with our technical team to deliver key elements of the housing legislation that requires work to be 'necessary and appropriate' for the person and 'reasonable and practicable' given the type and condition of the property.

- **Technicians** - Accessible Homes has several technicians who are trained as trusted assessors. They fit minor adaptations and check the home to make sure that the recipient of the service is as safe as possible.
- **Technology Enabled Care (TEC) team** - carry out research into smart home technology, assess people's needs, and fit care lines and other suitable technical equipment. This is a new and expanding part of the service that will become increasingly important as technological solutions develop and improve.
- **Surveyors** - carry out surveys and technical assessments of properties and work out how adaptations and other changes can be carried out in practice. This can be a difficult task when room sizes are small and layouts awkward.

They do most of the drawings and specifications, but in more complex cases they work with the planning department and with outside professionals such as architects and engineers. An important part of their role is to brief and supervise the tradespeople and contractors who carry out the adaptations to people's homes.

- **Outside contractors and tradespeople** - Accessible Homes uses a range of trusted contractors who are skilled in this type of specialist work. They are chosen for their ability to work successfully with disabled and older people who usually remain living in their homes whilst alterations and modifications are carried out. They are covered by a contract that sets out what is expected.
- **Caseworkers** - help with all the steps in the process. They are the first point of contact for any questions or queries. They guide people through the process of applying for funding, help them fill out forms, keep them informed about progress, and support them during the time they have contractors working in their homes.

3. Assessment

If needs are straightforward

Sometimes solutions are simple and, provided the person is eligible, equipment and minor adaptations will be provided without an assessment from the occupational therapy team.

Care Direct will arrange for equipment to be delivered directly, or the customer will get an appointment for a technician or contractor to fit an adaptation, such as a grab rail or stair rail.

For those who need an assessment

There are two stages to the assessment process:

- **An assessment of the person and their needs** by someone from the occupational therapy team to determine that the relevant works are 'necessary and appropriate' to meet their needs.
- **A survey of the home** by the technical team to see what options are possible and that it is 'reasonable and practicable' to carry out the relevant works given the nature of the property, its age, condition and layout. This is discussed further in the section on major adaptations.

Occupational therapy assessment

If an assessment is needed this will involve an appointment with an Occupational Therapist or an Occupational Therapy Aide. They may be from Accessible Homes, Adult Social Care or the Disabled Children's service.

The aim of the assessment is to collect medical details, discuss the environmental barriers people face in their home, assess how this prevents them doing what they want to do, and what solutions might meet current and future needs.

The occupational therapy assessment happens in one of the following ways:

1. **Telephone/video/online assessment** – if needs are straightforward.
2. **At the specialist Home Independence Centre in Bristol** – normally the preferred option as people can try different types of equipment and see adapted room settings.
3. **Home visit** – for people unable to travel to appointments, who cannot use technology, or have more complex needs.

At the assessment, consent will be obtained to record information including:

- Up to date medical details
- Weight, height and other relevant body measurements
- Barriers, restrictions and constraints in the home environment
- Observations about how people move around, their routines and tasks, and how they use their homes
- Their goals for what they want to be able to do and what is most important to them
- The views of carers and other household members
- Measurements and photographs of the home to give a fuller picture of the functional difficulties people experience.

Outcome of the assessment

The outcome of the assessment will state what eligible needs are identified, the options to meet those needs and any supporting medical evidence required.

Occupational therapy staff will raise a request for any equipment to be delivered or minor adaptations installed.

Minor adaptation work is carried out by Accessible Homes technicians or approved contractors.

Cost

Provided someone is eligible, there is not normally a charge for minor adaptations or equipment costing under £1,500.

Timeframes targets for minor works and equipment are:

- High priority referrals 7 days
- Standard priority referrals 28 days

Housing association tenants - minor adaptations will normally be provided by the landlord. If the association is unable to provide these, Accessible Homes will consider the request.

4. Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Hub

Accessible Homes provides home technology for adults who are eligible and referred by adult social care. This is to prevent hospital admission, allow return home after a hospital stay, or as an alternative to traditional care support.

There are an increasing range of new devices coming onto the market that make it easier for people to manage in their homes. We have a specialist TEC team who are exploring and testing new equipment and will be able to supply a range of products.

The TEC assessor/installer will carry out a home visit to identify and fit the most suitable equipment to meet the person's needs.

Cost

Most equipment will be supplied on loan and returned to us when no longer needed. If required, we will organise regular testing of equipment.

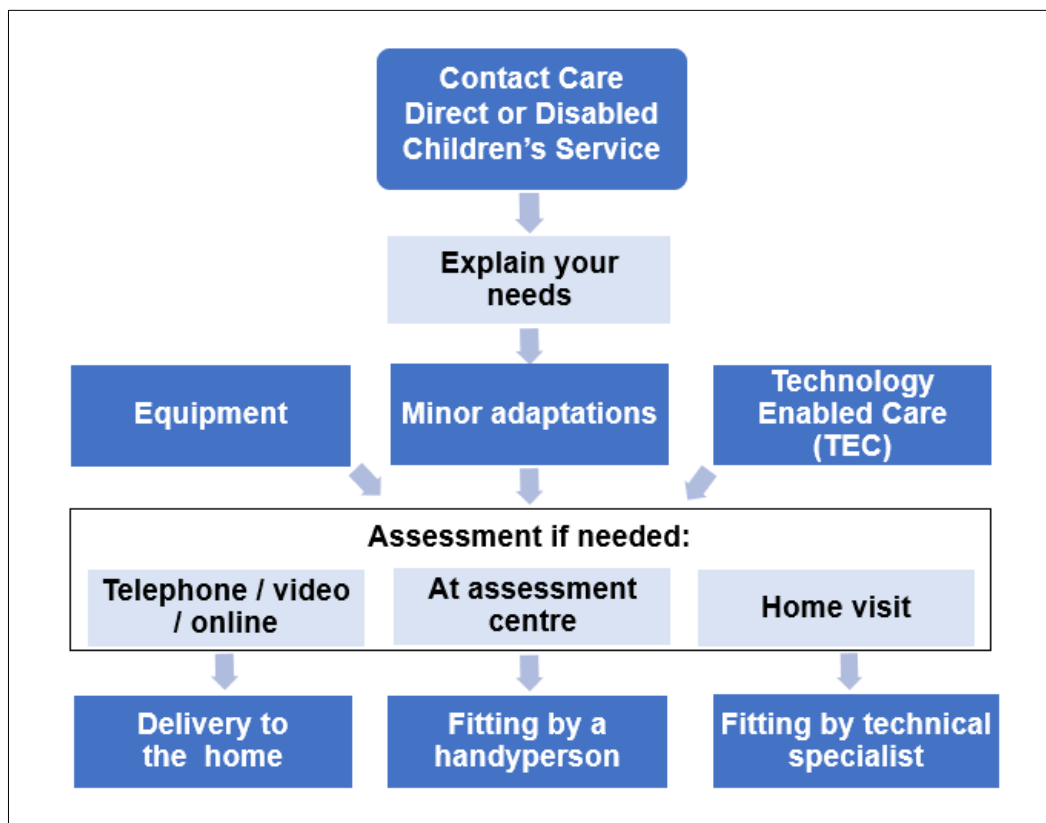
There may be charge for the equipment, for installation, or for the cost of ongoing monitoring. The customer will be advised about this following the assessment.

We also do private careline installations for which there will be a charge.

Timeframe targets for Technology Enabled Care are:

- 2 working days for urgent referrals
- 10 working days for standard referrals.

Figure 1. The process for getting equipment, minor adaptations and home TEC



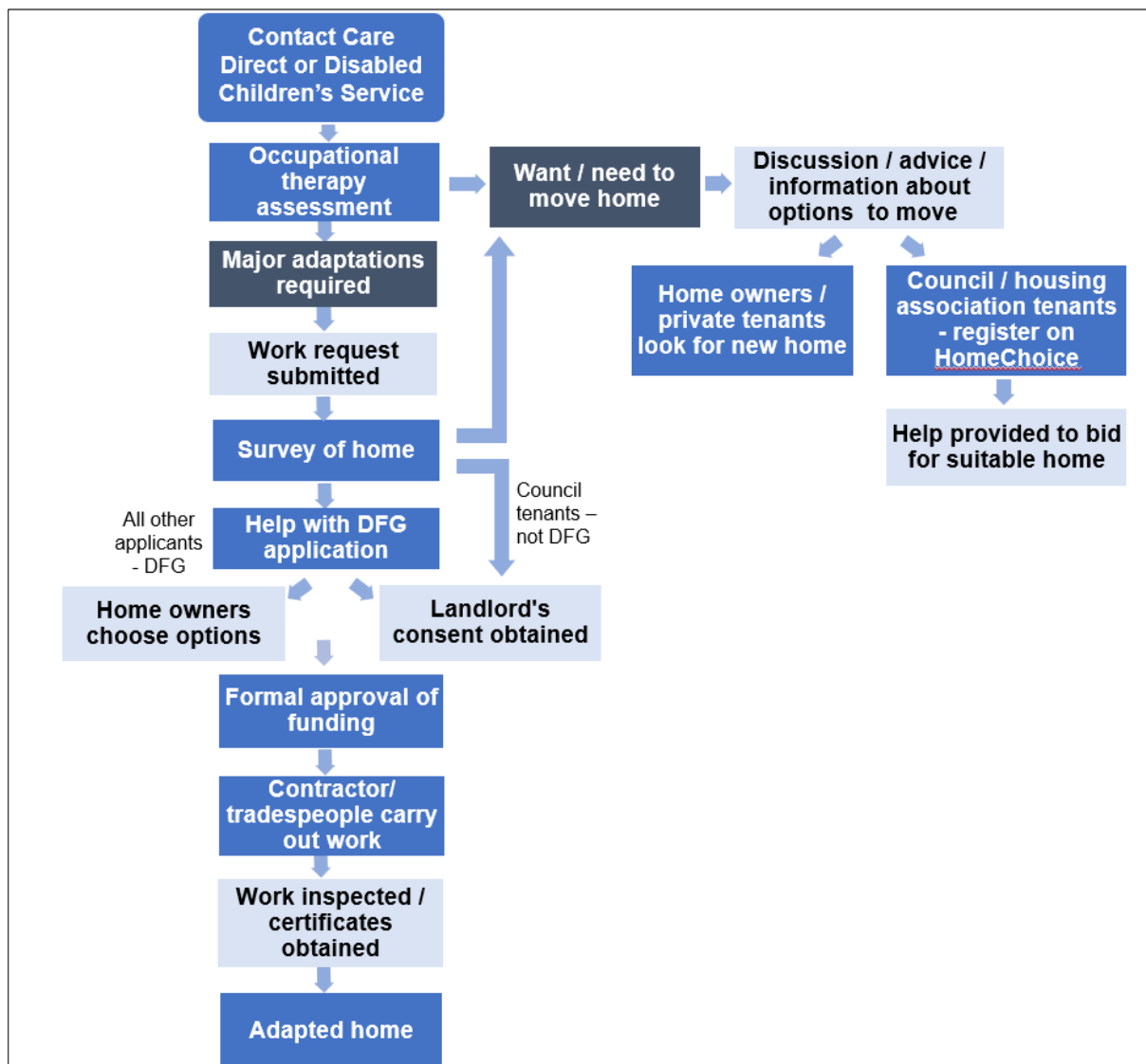
5. Making more major changes

Once the possibility of using equipment, home technology or minor adaptations has been explored it may be necessary to plan more major changes.

- **For some this will involve organising major adaptations to the home:**
 - For home owners, private tenants, or housing association residents this will involve a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).
 - For council tenants home adaptations funding comes from the council's Housing Revenue Account.
- **For others it may be better to move to a more suitable home.**

The diagram below outlines the process. Each stage is described in more detail in the following sections.

Figure 2. The process for getting major adaptations or moving home



6. Making decisions about moving home

We usually begin by having a wider discussion around adapting the current home or moving. Some people would prefer to move, but others may have to consider moving if their current home is unsuitable or will need substantial work to make it suitable. It often leads to a home that is much easier to manage.

We discuss the options in the context of family and friendships, support networks and the likely availability of alternative homes. The aim is to help people find a home that will support both their current and future needs.

Home owners, private tenants and housing association residents may want or need to move. We can talk about the options, and provide advice, information and links to other useful services.

Council tenants – major home adaptations will not usually be allowed unless the option to move has been explored first.

We may be able to provide some support with the costs of moving to more suitable accommodation. If you are a council tenant there is support with the process of registering and bidding on the HomeChoice system.

7. Major adaptations

a) Occupational therapy assessment

For major adaptations people must have an assessment by one of the occupational therapy team (see Section 3). The occupational therapy assessment identifies the person's needs that are eligible for grant funding and sets out the possible options to meet those needs.

Timeframe targets for an Assessment of your needs:

- 2 weeks for high priority referrals
- 8 weeks for Standard referrals

Timeframes given above are approximate and can change due to volumes of referrals coming into the service and staff availability. However, we will keep you informed

b) Survey of the property

A survey of the property may also be needed. This will be carried out by our technical team or one of our approved contractors. They will consider:

- How to meet eligible needs identified by the occupational therapist in a cost-effective way

- If the adaptations can be carried out safely and without any adverse effects given the construction type, age and structural condition of the building
- How many people are in the home and if any have competing needs
- If needs can be met with fitted equipment such as a stair/through lift
- The internal space available and how this can be better used before consideration is made about whether to provide additional space.
- The existing support network and needs of carers
- If the adaptations will meet long-term needs
- If anything would affect neighbours or other residents e.g. ramps
- Access to the garden may only be a proportion of the garden for example, fencing is generally limited to 20 linear meters.

The survey will result in a schedule of eligible works.

For council tenants, once there is an occupational therapy assessment and a schedule of works the process is relatively straightforward and will be arranged between Accessible Homes and Landlord Services.

For home owners, housing association and private tenants the schedule of eligible works is the list of works that the Disabled Facilities Grant will cover. The Disabled Facilities Grant process is outlined below.

8. Disabled Facilities Grant process

a) Disabled Facilities Grant application

Homeowners, housing association residents and private rented sector tenants will have to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant.

We can help people fill in the paperwork to apply for the grant.

You will be informed in writing once the grant has been approved.

It is very important that you **do NOT start work before your grant is approved** as this can invalidate the grant application.

b) Test of resources

All Disabled Facilities Grant applicants will have a test of resources unless the application is for a child or young person, or the applicant is on certain benefits. Accessible Homes will carry out a test of income and savings to see how much grant will be approved and whether you have anything to pay.

c) Landlord's consent

Housing association and private rented tenants – we need your landlord's consent before any work can be carried out. Once we have consent we will work with the landlord to decide who organises and carries out the work.

d) Home owners – choices about how to proceed

Home owners must make a choice about how to proceed with work. This is outlined in a letter that is sent out with an 'Options Leaflet'. You can discuss this with our team before you make a final decision. There are three choices:

- 1) **Accessible Homes arranges everything** – this is subject to capacity
 - We will visit the home, discuss the adaptations that are needed and agree what will work best.
 - Our technical team will do any drawings, produce a schedule of works and brief the contractor.
 - We will use our approved contractors to do the work, supervise their progress on site and check the completed work before paying the contractor.
- 2) **Choose your own builder and organise and manage the work yourself**
 - This gives you more control over the process, but it will involve you in more work.
 - We recommend you get at least two estimates from different builders which you send us with your completed application forms.
 - We work out how much grant you are entitled to and approve the grant.
 - You arrange for the approved contractor to carry out the work and supervise them yourself.
- 3) **Employ an agent**
 - You might want to choose this option if the adaptations are extensive, your situation is complicated, or you want extra work carried out.
 - You will have to pay a fee to the agent for this service, but this will be included in the Disabled Facilities Grant. The agent will get contractor's estimates and help you fill in the grant application forms.
 - Once the grant is approved the agent will do any drawings and schedule of works, brief the contractor, and supervise the work on site. They will also be responsible for applying for Building Regulation and Planning approval.
 - The agent will inspect the finished work and check it meets your needs before paying any grant to the contractor.

e) Getting approval

Work cannot start before you have been told in writing that the grant (and any additional funding) is approved. If you are a tenant, we also need consent from your landlord.

For more complex work there may also need to be a planning application, engineers reports, or architect's drawings. This can take much more time to set up and may delay getting work on site. We will discuss this with you and keep you informed of progress.

Timeframe targets for an Approval/or Works Ordered:

- High Priority 6 weeks
- Standard Priority 10 weeks

Timeframes given above are approximate and can change due to volumes of referrals coming into the service and staff availability. However, we will keep you informed. Accurate timing will be given on receipt of the work request

f) Carrying out the work

Once everything has been approved the contractors can start work.

If we are organising this, we will inspect the work in progress.

Owners can choose to do this stage themselves or have an agent to do it for them.

g) Completing the work

When the contractors are finished, we (or your agent) will check the work and provide the necessary final certification. This may require planning and Building Regulation approval or electrical and gas certificates. The Disabled Facilities Grant will not be paid until the final certification is in place.

Grant payments will be made to the grant applicant or contractor on completion of works.

On bigger schemes stage payments can be made during the works. These will need to be agreed and signed off by Accessible Homes.

Timeframe targets Approval/Order to Completion of Works:

High Priority 4 weeks

Standard Priority 16 weeks

Table 1. recaps on all the stages in the process of applying for the Disabled Facilities Grant and carrying out the work.

Major adaptations process	Home owners	Private rented tenants	Housing association tenants
Assessment by the occupational therapy team	To identify a person's eligible needs and the possible options to meet those needs.		
Survey by the technical team	To draw up a schedule of eligible works - this is the work that the grant will cover.		
Deciding how to do the work	Home owners have the option to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Accessible Homes to do the work (subject to capacity) • Organise the work yourself • Appoint an agent 	We need the landlord's consent before any work can be carried out. We will work with the landlord to decide who organises and carries out the work.	
Supply estimates (owners only)	If arranging work yourself, you (or your agent) need to send in a minimum of two competitive builders estimates based in the schedule of work supplied by AH.	N/A	
Disabled Facilities Grant application	Complete the paperwork to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant – we can help with this process.		
Test of resources (Does not apply to disabled children and people on certain benefits)	Accessible Homes will carry out a test of income and savings to see how much grant will be approved and whether you have anything to pay.		
Getting approval	Work cannot start before you have been told in writing that the grant (and any additional funding) is approved.	Work cannot start until the grant (and any additional funding) is approved and we have received consent from your landlord.	
Planning the work	If Accessible Homes is managing the work, our technical team will do any drawings, produce a schedule of works and brief the contractor. Owners have the choice to organise this stage themselves or appoint an agent to do this for them.		
Carrying out the work	Once everything has been approved the contractors can start work. If we are organising this, we will inspect the work in progress. Owners can choose to do this stage themselves or have an agent to do it for them.		
Completing the work	When the contractors are finished, we (or your agent) will check the work and provide the necessary final certification (planning and Building Regulation approval, electrical and gas certificates) before the Disabled Facilities Grant is paid.		

9. Warranties, maintenance and servicing

- **Warranties** are in place for certain items to cover faults or breakdown - you will be advised of this at the point of works being completed.
- **Maintenance** - you will be advised how to maintain and look after your adaptations.
- **If you have any type of lift there will be a warranty that covers the initial period after installation (stairlift, step lift, through lift, ceiling track hoist):**
 - **Council tenants** – an approved contractor on the Councils behalf will carry out an annual servicing and maintenance check.
 - **Housing association residents** - you need to speak to your landlord about how your lift will be serviced and maintained - there may a service charge.
 - **Homeowners and private tenants** - you will need to make arrangements for the servicing and maintenance of your lift. You can speak to the installer to agree this.

10. Recycling

- **Equipment** - to return equipment that is no longer needed, contact Care Direct.
- **Technology Enable Care (TEC)** – much of this equipment is on loan and must be returned to our TEC Hub when no longer needed. Contact Care Direct to arrange this.
- **Stairlifts** – where a lift is no longer required please contact Accessible Homes via Care Direct to see if we can help with removal or recycling.
- **Further questions** about recycling equipment, TEC and home adaptations – please contact us to see if we can help via Care Direct.

11. Further information

Leaflets that provide more information on Accessible Homes services can be found here:

- [Our service](#)
- [Adapting your home](#)
- [Helping you move home](#)

Council stock - for more information about the Making best use of stock (MBUS) policy please contact your housing officer.

12. Help to go ahead without Accessible Homes support

At times of high demand there may be a long wait for occupational therapy services and technical support. We encourage people who can afford to do work themselves and need less support to go ahead themselves. There are various sources of information, advice and support:

- **WE Care Home Improvements - advice and practical help with home adaptations, repairs and improvements:**
 - Home Independence Centre – displays, room settings, advice and information <https://wecr.org.uk/about/our-bristol-showroom/>.
 - You can make an appointment to see an occupational therapist.
 - A handy person team help with minor adaptations, repairs and other small jobs around the home.
 - WE Care also offer a full agency service to organise and manage more major home adaptations, repairs and improvements <https://wecr.org.uk>.
- **Lendology Home Improvement Loans.** They work across the South West providing a variety of loans in partnership with local councils. They fund home adaptations, repairs, and home improvements for home owners and private landlords. <https://www.lendology.org.uk>.
- **HOOP – assess your current home.** Questionnaire to help you check how well your home still suits you <https://hoop.eac.org.uk/hooptool/index.php>.
- **Various online sites to help you find accessible homes to buy or rent** e.g. <https://accessibleprs.co.uk>; <https://www.accessible-property.org.uk>.
- **Trustmark** - only government endorsed quality scheme covering tradespeople who do work in and around the home. <https://www.trustmark.org.uk>.
- **Making your home energy efficient** – advice about grants and loans to improve energy efficiency <https://www.cse.org.uk/advice/funding/grants>.
- **Well Aware - advice and information.** Online information about a wide range of organisations, support groups, community groups, events and activities that can help you improve your health and wellbeing. You can also find suppliers if you want to buy your own equipment. It covers Bristol and South Gloucestershire <https://www.wellaware.org.uk>. There is also a telephone help line for people who do not use the internet Tel: 0808 808 5252.
- **Age UK Bristol - advice, information and support for older people.** They provide services to all older people in Bristol <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/bristol/>.

- **WECIL - support for independent living** (The West of England Centre for Inclusive Living). User led organisation dedicated to supporting independent living for anyone who identifies as being a disabled person <https://wecil.co.uk>.

Appendix A - Legal Framework

Legislation/policy	Explanation
The Care Act 2014	The Act aims to improve people's independence and wellbeing. It makes clear that local authorities must provide or arrange information and services that help prevent people developing needs for care and support or delay people deteriorating such that they would need ongoing care and support
Children Act 1989	Duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in need...by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs, minimising the effect on disabled children within their area of their disabilities, and to give such children the opportunity to lead lives which are as normal as possible.
Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (Now applies to children only. The legislation for adults has been superseded by the Care Act 2014)	Assistance in arranging adaptations or provision of additional facilities to promote "safety, comfort or convenience". Section 2 states that if a Local Authority is satisfied through assessment that it is necessary to make arrangements, for amongst other matters, the provision of practical assistance in the family home, the Local Authority is under a duty to make those arrangements.
Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996	This is the legislation which specifies the criteria for the Disabled Facilities Grant.
The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002	This allows each local authority to offer financial assistance tailored to the needs of their area, provided they are still able to meet their mandatory requirement to offer the DFG. It gives more flexibility in the type of work that can be supported and can make the process simpler.
Bristol City Council Financial Assistance Policy (Regulatory Reform Order 2002)	If you are an owner occupier, housing association or private sector tenant this outlines the assistance available, eligibility and conditions:
Making Best Use of Stock Policy (MBUS)	For Council tenants – this explains how Housing Delivery will assist you to remain independent, when properties will be adapted and how they can help you to find more a more accessible home.

Guidance/good practice	Explanation
RCOT (2015) Home adaptations: The Care Act 2014 and related provision across the United Kingdom	This guide for occupational therapists refers to the effect of the Care Act 2014 on the provision of home adaptations for adults in England.
RCOT/Housing LIN (2019) Home Adaptations without Delay	This identifies the type of cases that require occupational therapy input and sets out how occupational therapy and technical staff can work better together to be more person-centred.
Home Adaptations for Disabled People: A Detailed Guide to Related Legislation, Guidance and Good Practice, last updated 2015	The current national guidance for good practice produced by the Home Adaptations Consortium and published by Care and Repair England.
Independent Review of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) 2018	This independent review assessed how the DFG is currently used and made evidence-based recommendations about how it could operate in future.