

# Aids and adaptations



# Aids and adaptations

Occupational therapy promotes the health and wellbeing of people by providing aids and adaptations so they can continue to live independently at home and lead a more active life.

## Health and Social Care Trusts

Your local Health Trust may provide equipment aids and adaptations to help with daily tasks such as cooking, dressing and bathing through its Occupational Therapy Department.

These may include:

- grab rails
- stair lifts
- blocks to make chairs and beds higher
- raised toilet and bath seats

An occupational therapist will carry out an assessment of your needs and may visit you to provide expert advice on particular equipment aids that will suit you. Alternatively they may ask you to attend a centre where they can assess you.

The Trust uses **eligibility criteria** to decide who to provide equipment to. You may be at risk if you do not have the right equipment to support you to live independently, therefore you may have a greater chance of qualifying for help.

Some specialist equipment aids (such as continence equipment and commodes) can be provided through the NHS. You should contact your GP surgery to find out more about accessing these aids.

## Adapting your home

If it is necessary to have your home adapted to enhance your daily life, an occupational therapist will assess you to identify which adaptations will best meet your needs. An occupational therapist's report is necessary to determine eligibility for a means tested Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). A DFG is available to home owners and those in the private rented sector to make adaptations to their home.

Social housing tenants living in Housing Executive or Housing Association accommodation should contact their local office to request help with adaptations.

Sometimes it is complicated to make decisions on major

adaptations and this process may take some time to complete. Support may be obtained from **Staying Put**, a service provided by FOLD Housing Group.

If the occupational therapist agrees that your current accommodation is unsuitable you can apply to the Housing Executive to be re-housed as you will be deemed homeless even though you remain in your current accommodation. This applies to both home owners and private tenants.

### **What if I need help urgently?**

Social Services should help you by providing support for any urgent needs while awaiting the outcome of a full assessment.

### **Assessment Waiting Times**

Waiting times are determined by priority. You will be given priority if you are:

- coming out of hospital and at risk
- living alone and at risk
- living with a carer who is older or disabled
- terminally ill.

If you are a priority:

- your assessment will start within two weeks of being referred to your Health and Social Care Trust or unit of management
- your occupational therapist will recommend the equipment or minor adaptations you need within a further week
- if your therapist is already familiar with your needs, they will recommend any major adaptations to your home within two months of your referral
- if your disabilities are not known the therapist will make a recommendation within six months (where possible).

If you are not a priority:

- your assessment will start within three months of being referred to your Health and Social Care Trust or unit of management.

*Age NI would like to acknowledge The Law Centre of Northern Ireland and The Ladies, St Mary's Parish Church Friendship Circle, Comber for their contribution to the Community Care Factsheets.*



3 Lower Crescent, Belfast BT7 1NR

**T 028 9024 5729 F 028 9023 5497**

**E [advice@ageni.org](mailto:advice@ageni.org) [www.ageni.org](http://www.ageni.org)**

Age NI is a company limited by guarantee registered in Northern Ireland and recognised as a charity by HM Revenue and Customs: registered office address 3 Lower Crescent, Belfast, BT7 1NR. Company number NI071940, HMRC Charity Reference number XT14600.