



## **Guidance for Aids and Adaptations**

This guidance explains what you need to do if someone in your home wants to request an aid or adaptation. We all hope to live as independently as we can, for as long as we can, and there are ways we can help you do this with some simple adaptations to your home. Whether it is due to older age, an illness or a disability, there are things which will make life easier for you, such as a ramp at your front door or grab rails in the bathroom.

### **Who can apply?**

All tenants and permanent members of their household who have any long term condition, are struggling with everyday activities and are being made disabled by their environment. The adaptation should increase safety, independence and social inclusion. There is no minimum length of tenancy. All requests for adaptations will be assessed and considered on an individual basis.

There are two types of adaptations, minor or major. Whether you need a minor adaptation or major adaptation to your home, the first step is always the same. You will need to be referred to an Occupational Therapist (OT) so they can carry out an assessment of your needs.

#### **Minor adaptations**

These are items which are not fitted to your home and can easily be moved or changed, such as grab rails:

- Aids and adaptations costing £1,000 or less will be funded by the association's own annual aids and adaptations budget. A means test does not apply to minor aids and adaptations.
- Ongo Homes has a limited budget set aside for minor adaptations and therefore limits will apply on what adaptations will be carried out by the Caretaking Team.
- Most minor aids and adaptation works are carried out by our own Caretaking Team but, on occasion, we may employ specialist contractors to undertake work on our behalf.
- Please contact Ongo Homes should you require more information about minor adaptations.

#### **Major adaptations**

These are more long term fittings which require some structural changes:

- Providing ramps, widening doors, shallow steps.
- Improving controls for heating and lighting.
- Adapting or providing suitable washing, bathing or toilet facilities.
- Ensuring the disabled person can move around and access parts of the home so they can look after someone else.
- Installing a stair lift or a 'through the floor' lift or ceiling track hoists.
- Adaptations to the kitchen, such as lowering counters.
- Adaptations to the bathroom, e.g. toilet or bath or level access shower.
- Widening doors.

Major adaptations are those that cost more than £1000 and are usually funded through a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) which is means tested. The local authority (North Lincolnshire Council) administers the DFG often using quite strict criteria.

A Disabled Facilities Grant (in England) is a grant from your local council to pay for changes to your home so you can continue to live there. The amount paid through the grant will depend on your income and outgoings.

The DFG can be a lengthy process and timescales for completion vary. As part of the process **you will need to contact** the Core Therapy Service for an assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT). If you require a major adaptation to your home, a home assessment will need to be undertaken by an OT to determine whether or not an adaptation is required to assess your needs and agree solutions.

The OT will then contact Ongo Homes to discuss the adaptation requested and whether we would grant an 'owners consent in principle' for this work to be carried out on the property before liaising with the Home Assistance Team (part of North Lincolnshire Council).

#### **Suitability of properties:**

If it is recommended that a major adaptation is needed, there might be different options available to you. If your property is unsuitable for the recommended adaptations, Ongo Homes will discuss with you what alternatives are available. This may include considering a transfer to a more suitable property.

It might be that Ongo Homes already have a fully adapted home perfect for your needs and so you might consider moving into an alternative home. We will help you throughout the process to make it as easy and stress-free as possible.

#### **The means test:**

Should the council agree that you need adaptations to your home they will produce a report outlining exactly what you need. This is really important as it helps to determine what work needs to be done. The costs are usually covered but if there is a cost for you, the council will discuss this with you before any work is carried out.

The means test will be carried out by the Home Assistance Team (HAT) which is a part of North Lincolnshire Council. Therefore Ongo Homes has no influence as to the outcome or determination of this test and during this stage any queries relating to the means test should be directed to the HAT.

The means test determines how much, if anything, you will have to pay towards the cost of the work. If you are a disabled adult, you must provide financial and benefits information for you and your partner. There is no means testing for families of disabled children under 18. Depending on the assessment, the amount of financial assistance offered can vary up to 100% of the cost.

The Home Assistance Team must give a decision and tell you what your financial contribution, if any, will be. If you qualify for this DFG they will arrange and manage contractors to undertake the work and will liaise with Ongo Homes where required.

Further information can be found at: <http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/council-tax-benefits-and-housing/housing/improvements-and-funding/home-assistance/>

### **Core Therapy Service:**

The Core Therapy Service incorporates the Occupational Therapy (OT) service and is operated by Northern Lincolnshire and Goole (NLaG) NHS Foundation Trust. The Occupational Therapists are based in three locality teams across North Lincolnshire.

If you feel that you would benefit from Occupational Therapy it is advised you contact OT services direct yourself in order to arrange an assessment. Please call the locality team for your area:

- **West Network - Scunthorpe North and Isle of Axholme** (Wards of Town, Burringham & Gunness, Crosby & Park, Axholme Central, Axholme North, and Axholme South)  
**Tel: 030 3330 6802**
- **Scunthorpe South** (Wards of Kingsway with Lincoln Gardens, Bottesford, Brumby, Frodingham, and Ashby) **Tel: 030 3330 6804**
- **East Network - Brigg and Barton** (Wards of Brigg & Wolds, Broughton & Appleby, Ridge, Barton, Burton-upon-Stather & Winterton, and Ferry) **Tel: 030 3330 6748**

The duration and severity of your condition determines whether you can access care through your local council or the NHS. In general:

- For short-term conditions, such as after an operation, occupational therapy is usually accessed through the NHS
- For long-term conditions, such as a permanent physical disability, occupational therapy is usually accessed through your local council's social services.
- Social Services and Occupational Therapy work in collaboration for short and long term conditions.

### **Self-funded requests:**

If you have decided to self-fund and arrange for your own contractors to undertake any home adaptation work (and not go down the means tested DFG route via the local authority) it would still be necessary for you to arrange an OT assessment.

If you are going to buy your own equipment, it is still necessary to have an assessment by an Occupational Therapist. They will provide guidance on what equipment is most suitable and advise you on what is available. Please see table below the 'how to apply section' for information we would require to process your self-funded adaptation request.

### **Retrospective Permission:**

If at any time it becomes clear that an adaptation had been installed without permission, then the tenant will be contacted and retrospective permission will be granted provided that the necessary paperwork is completed and returned confirming that all of the necessary conditions have been met.

We may ask you to remove, put back or make good any adaptation work you have completed but for which we have not approved and/or which does not meet our standards.

## How to apply:

<p>1) An alteration permission form must be completed and available by contacting our Customer Service Team. You will need to provide full details of the adaptation you would like to carry out.</p>	<p>2) We only give permission for adaptations if we are prompted by an OT (Occupational Therapist) assessment. Regardless of how a customer wants to fund an adaptation (themselves, from a charity or grant assistance from the local authority), they first need to provide us with a referred assessment from the Core Therapy Service (CTS).</p>
<p>3) The installation of any adaptation must be carried out by a competent person and confirmation of your chosen contractor details must be provided. A permission form must be completed with information from the chosen contractor as shown:</p> <p>*We may request a risk assessment and a method statement from your chosen contractor for certain adaptations but will contact you if this is the case*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please provide a quote on letter headed paper with details of the contractor. Quote must include a plan/layout of the current area (where work is to be carried out) and the new proposed layout showing dimensions of adaptation to be installed.</li><li>• Quote from the contractor must also include a full description of the proposed work, materials to be used and how the works will be carried out.</li><li>• The contractor must have Public and Employers Liability Insurance. Please include insurance details/documents for your contractor.</li><li>• Details of any warranty period on the work once completed should you encounter any problems once adaptation has been installed/fitted.</li></ul>
<p>4) Any pictures taken via phone can be emailed if necessary to <a href="mailto:Enquiries@ongo.co.uk">Enquiries@ongo.co.uk</a>. Please use your first line of address as reference e.g. 'Permission request for 20 Ongo Road'</p>	

## Guidance for application to undertake adaptation work

### **If a stairlift is to be fitted:**

- With your application we will need the referral from Occupational Therapy. All stairlifts require an Occupational Therapy assessment, even if you are paying for it yourself. We would always recommend that a full assessment is carried out for all stairlift users, which includes taking of the necessary measurements of your weight, height and other specific measurements to ensure that the stairlift is suitable for your needs and is safe for you to use.
- We do not give permission for second hand stairlifts to be installed – applies to purchased and rented.
- The standard of workmanship must be to the satisfaction of Ongo Homes Limited and carried out by a suitably qualified stairlift engineer who must provide the required minor works certification. Most stairlifts are powered by a battery charger plugged into the nearest socket. In this case no minor works electrical certificate would be needed or provided by installer. Any certification will need to be sent to Ongo Homes.
- Tenant to confirm the date of stairlift installation and also confirm the make, model and serial number of the stairlift.
- Ongo Homes will service the stair lift every 6 months from the date of installation to satisfy our own compliance requirements.
- Ongo Homes will undertake a LOLER inspection (lifting operations and lifting equipment regulations 1998) every 6 months on this stairlift.
- All work required to enable the stairlift installation is arranged and undertaken at the tenants expense.

### **If a shower cubicle/wetroom is to be fitted:**

- The shower must not exceed the limitations of the existing electrical installation and consumer unit.
- The work must be carried out by qualified electrician to BS 7671 who must provide the required minor works certification. This will need to be sent to Ongo Homes Ltd once the work is complete.
- All aspects of the work that were submitted must be carried out by fully qualified trades persons.

**If a ramp is to be fitted:**

- The ramp will need to be part M compliant. You can locate any supporting documentation from the Building Control Team at North Lincolnshire Council
- You will need to remove the ramp, rails and reinstate the steps and the doorway. Additionally you will need to replace any other items that have been altered for the ramp to be installed at the property following the end of your tenancy. Failure to do this will mean a recharge for removal and renewal of materials/ costs that Ongo Homes Ltd may incur.
- The work does not affect the structural integrity of the property.
- There must be no damage to the external cladding/brickwork to your property, if damage occurs then this must be repaired at your cost.

**For all types of adaptations the following also apply:**

- The tradesperson will contact Ongo Homes direct for any relevant asbestos information relating to the installation.
- Work must be carried out in a manner to ensure minimum disruption to your neighbours and in line with relevant Health and Safety guidelines.
- No costs in connection with the work to be incurred by Ongo Homes.
- The work must be completed within 3 months of the initial request. Failure to do so will mean you having to apply again for permission.
- All debris resulting from the alteration must be disposed of in an appropriate manner.
- Permission is limited to the works specified in the initial request.

## **Frequently asked Questions:**

### **Would I be able to replace my bath with a shower enclosure?**

Whether you would want to replace a bath with a shower enclosure or a wetroom, or if you would like a stairlift, a ramp or any other type of adaptation we would require sight of an Occupational Therapy Assessment Referral or a letter of support from the Occupational Therapist (OT).

We only give permission for aids and adaptations if we are prompted by an OT assessment. An Occupational Therapist can advise you of the most appropriate equipment and adaptations to suit your needs. The OT service will work directly with you to determine any adaptations you will require. If you would like an OT referral you will have to first contact them using the relevant telephone number shown under the 'Core Therapy Service' heading to arrange an assessment.

### **I would like an adaptation not for myself but for a family member who resides in the property. Would I still require an assessment from the OT for this request?**

As you are requesting an adaptation based on your health needs or any other member of your household, we will be need to process this request as part of our Aids and Adaptation process which means we will need information from an Occupational Therapist (OT).

Same reasoning would apply if anything was installed/constructed without our permission for any member of your household with health needs. We would still require evidence from an OT assessment recommending that this adaptation is appropriate and would be suitable for the individual concerned.

### **I am a tenant in a Ongo property outside the North Lincolnshire area. Will I be able to contact the Occupational Therapy Service using the contact numbers in this guidance?**

No. You will need to contact the Occupational Therapy Service within your local authority area. You may be able to find the contact number for this service on your local council's website.