



Help with adaptations to your home

Information for Owner Occupier and Private tenants



Westminster City Council aims to support you to live as safely and as independently as possible. There is a wide range of specially designed equipment or minor adaptations that can be made to promote independence such as grab rails, door intercoms and alarms. You may, however need a more significant or major home adaptation to help give you the freedom to get in/out of and around your home, or to use the facilities within it. Adaptations are about removing the physical barriers in your home that prevent you living independently.

What is a home adaptation?

Adaptations can include:

- replacing a bath with a walk-in shower or fitting an over-bath shower
- fitting a stair lift
- adapting your home for wheelchair use (e.g. widening doors, installing ramps or a ceiling track hoist)
- putting in special lighting for people with a visual impairment.

What are the eligibility criteria for an adaptation?

Westminster City Council cannot guarantee that your request for a major change to your home will automatically be agreed.

1. You must have a permanent and substantial disability
2. Any changes made to your home must be necessary and appropriate to meet your needs
3. The recommended changes must be reasonable and practicable, meaning that your home is able to be adapted. If this is not possible for your property, moving home may be a more suitable option.

How do I apply for a major adaptation to my home?

In the first instance you will need an assessment of your needs. Social services are moving towards a new approach to assessment which will enable you to complete a self assessment questionnaire with assistance from social services or an advocate (someone who help can you to have your say, and to take control of the decisions that affect you and your life).

If you are over 18 years of age and need an assessment:

Contact Social Services Customer Service Centre, Mon-Fri 9am – 5pm

Senior Passport for Older People: 020 7641 1444

Disabled People: 020 7641 1175

Text Box: 020 7641 8222

Email: adultsocialcare@westminster.gov.uk

If you need an assessment for a disabled child:

Contact the Children with Disabilities Team

Telephone: 020 7266 7105

If you are likely to need a major adaptation, a referral will be made for a specialist assessment by an occupational therapist.

What happens once my need for an adaptation has been agreed?

It is necessary to have a prioritisation system due to the demand for adaptations to homes. The occupational therapist will allocate a priority based on your needs using the following system:

STANDARD

1. Any adaptation to facilitate access either within the home, e.g. a stairlift, or out of the home e.g. a ramp
2. Any adaptation which provides access to bathing.

HIGH

1. Any adaptation to prevent falls, which may then require admission to hospital
2. Any adaptation to prevent deterioration where a person has a progressive illness e.g. Parkinson's disease or Multiple Sclerosis
3. Any adaptation, which is to facilitate access to the toilet where the person is using temporary equipment.

URGENT

1. Any adaptation for a child
2. Any adaptation to assist someone who has a rapidly deteriorating condition, which would be exacerbated without assistance. e.g. Muscular Dystrophy, Motor Neurone Disease, or a terminal illness
3. Any adaptation to facilitate hospital discharge
4. Any adaptation to prevent admission to hospital where the person has a regular and substantial care component to enable them to remain within the community, where without the adaptation there would be a serious impact on the person or the carer.

As an owner occupier or private tenant, you may wish to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant. If this is the case, the occupational therapist will send the recommendation to Westminster Home Improvement Agency (WHIA), who are based in City Hall Victoria.

What is a Disabled Facilities Grant?

- Financial assistance towards the cost of essential adaptations to your home. It is means tested but not if the adaptation is for a disabled child
- You must either be the owner of your home, a tenant or a landlord
- Certain grant conditions must be satisfied, for example regarding occupancy.

What happens when Westminster Home Improvement Agency receives the adaptation request?

WHIA will confirm that they have received your details and will arrange for a caseworker to visit you. The Agency will organize all the paperwork, any permissions to carry out the work, and liaise with builders needed to make an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant.

Once the grant has been approved by Westminster City Council the WHIA will arrange, supervise and confirm the completion of the works in conjunction with you, and then arrange for the grant to be paid to the builders.

WHIA can only carry out works immediately for those applicants with the highest level of need. The others will be progressed in date order because of the increasing demand for adaptations.

You do not have to use Westminster Home Improvement Agency. You may use the recommendation from the occupational therapist and apply for the grant yourself. You will need to arrange for a surveyor to draw up the specification of works. Two estimates from building contractors need to accompany your grant application and you are strongly advised to use a surveyor to monitor how the works are carried out.

Will I have to pay?

You may qualify for all the costs of the adaptation. WHIA will assess your financial position and, if you do not receive a qualifying benefit, a means test will be carried out (no means test is required if the adaptation is for a disabled child). Depending on the result of this you MAY be required to contribute towards the cost. The WHIA will support you in applying for any benefits you may be eligible for, at no cost. If the WHIA applies for a grant on your behalf their fees are included in the grant.

How long will it take to get my adaptation?

There are set targets for the average length of time that your adaptation should take. Once WHIA has received the adaptation recommendation, we aim to obtain grant approval within 10 weeks for urgent cases, and within 19 weeks for standard cases. Some cases take longer than others, especially when planning permission is required.

What happens if my home cannot be adapted and I need to move?

Moving home may be a better option in some instances where an adaptation is not possible, this is more likely if you are in temporary accommodation. If you feel that moving home may meet your needs, please contact your caseworker at WHIA to explore this option. Financial assistance may be available towards certain costs incurred in the move.

What if my needs change or I have any questions whilst I am waiting for my adaptation?

You should contact your occupational therapist or WHIA caseworker to discuss your situation if your needs change significantly whilst you are waiting for work to start on your home. If appropriate they can contact your local social services team to arrange for a reassessment of your needs.

For Adults contact Able 2 on 020 7637 3699

For Children contact the Children with Disabilities Team on 020 7266 7105

What if I am not happy with the service?

If you are not satisfied with your occupational therapy assessment you should ask to discuss this with the senior occupational therapist.

If you have a complaint about Westminster Home Improvement Agency you should contact the Agency Manager on 020 7641 3026.