



**Sheffield City Council
Home First Independent Living Service**

**Major Adaptations Eligibility Criteria and
Processes: February 2026**

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1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CRITERIA

The criteria for access to major adaptations provides information to you, family members, referrers, and partners about how to access major adaptations. They provide a fair, equitable and transparent way of enabling decisions to be made about what adaptations are provided across all tenures in Sheffield and how adaptations can improve you, your carers and family members outcomes.

A major adaptation is one costing more than £1000. There are two funding streams:

- ✓ Private sector (owner-occupier, private and housing association tenants can apply for by a disabled facilities grant (DFG) which is administered by the council's private sector housing team. A DFG is subject to means-testing in most cases (See Appendix 1).
- ✓ Council tenants are not means tested and the cost of the adaptation is funded by the council housing department.

The maximum mandatory amount is £30, 000 with a further discretionary sum of £20, 000 available in exceptional circumstances subject to the council's available funds.

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 stipulates that major adaptations must be recommended as 'necessary and appropriate' by the occupational therapist or trusted assessor, **AND** reasonable and practicable to complete by the housing team. These legal thresholds must be met for the council to consider major adaptations and the final decision on whether to award a disabled facilities grant lies with the housing team.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CRITERIA

Our aim is to enable you to live well, safely and independently in your own home as far as possible by enabling you to:

- ✓ Access your home and garden.
- ✓ Make your premises safer.
- ✓ Access the principal family room.
- ✓ Access a bedroom of sufficient size for normal sleeping arrangements to be maintained.
- ✓ Access a toilet.
- ✓ Access a bath or shower.
- ✓ Access a handwash basin.
- ✓ Access facilities to prepare and cook food for yourself or others living with you.
- ✓ Have a better heating and/ or cooling system.
- ✓ Have control of power, light, and heat
- ✓ Be able to care for others.

The purpose of an adaptation is to modify the home environment to help restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for you and your family. In implementing the Criteria, the service works to the following principles:

- ✓ We will be accessible, reliable, relevant, and as flexible as possible, acknowledging that services will be provided based on assessed need.
- ✓ Assessment of need will also involve the family, carer, representative and other agencies where appropriate.
- ✓ All information will be presented in an accessible form, which takes account of your communication needs.
- ✓ We will ensure that all relevant information will be provided at the right time to enable you to make informed decisions about adaptations to your home.

3 GENERAL CRITERIA

3.1 Criteria for Assessment

A request for assessment can be by self-referral or through another agency and there are no age restrictions to the criteria. To be eligible for consideration of major adaptations you must be disabled; that is –

- ✓ your sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired,
- ✓ you have a mental disorder or impairment of any kind,
- ✓ you are physically substantially disabled by illness, injury or impairment.

AND

- ✓ You are or could be registered under section 77 of the Care Act 2014
- ✓ You are a child or young person registered under paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989
- ✓ You are a disabled child as defined by s.17 of the Children Act 1989
- ✓ Your disability must significantly affect your ability to carry out normal activities of daily living in the home.
- ✓ Your ability to carry out their daily living tasks would not be expected to significantly improve through a program of rehabilitation or enablement.
- ✓ You are not waiting for medical or therapeutic intervention that is expected to significantly improve your ability to carry out your daily living tasks.

Our Approach: -

- An occupational therapist or trusted assessor will carry out a person-centred assessment of your needs, considering your views and your day-to-day needs. They will observe you carrying out different functional skills in and around your home. They will seek advice and information from other professionals known to you, (including medical evidence,) to assist in applying eligibility criteria and identify the most appropriate course of action
- A graded approach will be taken and if low level equipment and/ or minor adaptations will meet your long-term needs these will be recommended rather of major adaptations. The expected progression of your existing long term health conditions will be considered and used to inform any recommendations. The aim of any major adaptation will always be to meet your long-term needs.
- The outcome of intervention will aim to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for you and your family/ carers.
- Where you reside in supported living accommodation, only the area within the scheme designated for your sole use will be considered for adaptations (With the exception of ceiling track hoists).
- You must intend to live in the residence for 5 years where an adaptation is being considered.
- All areas withing the footprint of the property will be considered before any additional space such as an extension is recommended. This may mean re-purposing existing rooms or dividing large rooms where this is practicable.
- When recommending adaptations for children, we will take into account age appropriateness and endeavour to future proof designs which account for growth and promote potential to reach developmental milestones. Adaptations for children are noy intended to replace parental responsibility
- Adaptations will only be provided to your main residence, or the place where you are going to live.

3.2 Scope of the Assessment Criteria

The eligibility criteria set out the normal rules for eligibility however we recognise that to enable you to live as independently as possible assessors will consider your views and outcomes and take a personalised approach. This means there may be exceptions considered which are outside these criteria.

If a request is received that is out with the criteria and there is no scope for exceptions, you and the person making the referral will be informed of the reasons behind the decision so that we can support you to look at alternatives or another agency which can help promote your independence.

3.3 Re-housing

Sheffield City Council will work in partnership with housing providers to make the most effective use of properties within the City. Re-housing could be considered more appropriate than to carry out major adaptations your current property in-certain circumstances, for example:

- ✓ Where the property requires adaptations that are not considered reasonable and practicable to complete by the housing provider.
- ✓ The required adaptations are not structurally feasible.
- ✓ A clinician has concluded that adaptations would not meet your assessed needs and are therefore not appropriate. For example, a level access shower facility is feasible upstairs, but you are, or are likely to be within a short time, unable to access it due to inability to manage the stairs and a lift cannot be installed.

This is not an exhaustive list. All assessments and recommendations will be person centred, strength based, and consideration will be given to your views and wishes, needs, your carer's views and needs, family, and local support network, as well as the availability of adapted housing stock within Sheffield.

3.4 Consideration of Prognosis

If you have been diagnosed with a rapidly progressing and highly debilitating condition such as Motor Neurone Disease or have been given a palliative diagnosis, all assessment and recommendations for major adaptations will be treated as urgent.

Due to the life limiting nature of these conditions, major adaptations such as extensions may not be recommended due to the timescales involved in provision, therefore a pragmatic approach will be used to recommend the most practical and realistic solutions. The aim will always be to promote independence, confidence, privacy, and dignity.

4 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – MAJOR ADAPTATIONS

In line with Sheffield City Council's commitment to the environment, recycled equipment will be the first option considered.

If using a graded approach, low level equipment and/ or minor adaptations are not suitable major adaptations will be considered as follows:

4.1 Ramp and Step-Lifts/ Platforms

A ramp will be recommended under the following circumstances:

- ✓ You are a permanent wheelchair user, eligible for a wheelchair from the NHS for full time use
- ✓ You are unable to negotiate the steps in/out of your property safely even with equipment or minor adaptations AND have been assessed as able to mobilise up and down an incline safely.

A step-lift/ platform will be recommended under the following circumstances:

- ✓ You meet the criteria for a ramp but it is not structurally feasible to provide one

Notes:

- If you only go out when supported by another person, and can manage with support safely, a ramp will not be recommended
- Scooters can be kept on the roadside/ outside a property in a private yard or garden/ where they do not impede pedestrians ([Mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs: the rules: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mobility-scooters-and-powered-wheelchairs-the-rules)). Ramps will not be recommended for the purposes of getting a scooter in and out of the property where the person does not meet the essential ramp criteria.
- Generally, only one entrance will be ramped to allow access in and out of the person's home, however, multiple ramps may be considered necessary and appropriate to address the aims outlined in 1.2.1. For example, to facilitate access to the garden where it is not possible to also use this as the main access in/ out of the property.
- A ramp will not be recommended where it does not adhere to building regulations and planning permissions.
- A ramp will not be provided for standard pushchairs

4.2 Doorway and Door Alterations

Door alterations can include door widening, sliding doors, automated door opening systems and door entry systems. They will be recommended under the following circumstances:

- ✓ You are a permanent wheelchair user, and doorways need to be widened to allow enable you to access essential rooms, including entering and exiting your home.
- ✓ You have restricted mobility and door alterations will provide better access and safety.
- ✓ An additional doorway is the only feasible option to create level access to the property.
- ✓ You have significant difficulty or are unable to open and / or close your main external door due to restricted mobility or impaired upper limb function.

Notes:

- Additional doorways are not usually provided for emergency fire escape. A referral will be made to the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue team for an assessment regards emergency exit strategy and fire escapes where this is identified as needed.
- Kick plates will only be recommended to improve safety and not to improve aesthetics.

4.3 Stair-lift

A stairlift will be recommended under the following circumstances:

- ✓ Low level equipment and minor adaptations have been considered and/ or trialled and are not appropriate.
- ✓ You are unable or have significant difficulty using stairs due to restricted mobility, pain, or fatigue.

Notes:

- If you have a condition which would increase your risk of injury or harm when using a stair-lift, for example, cognitive impairment or seizures, the risk of providing a stair-lift may outweigh the benefits, in which case alternative solutions will be considered.
- A stairlift will not be recommended where it is not structurally feasible in your home.

4.4 Through Floor Lift

A through floor lift will be recommended when you meet the criteria for a stairlift but a stairlift is not an option because of one of the following:

- ✓ You are unable or would have significant difficulty transferring on / off a stairlift without increased risk to you and/ or your carers.
- ✓ Provision of a stair-lift would make using the stairs unsafe for other members of your household.

- ✓ A stair-lift cannot be fitted as it is not structurally feasible.

4.5 Ground Floor Facilities (Bedroom and bathroom)

Ground floor facilities will be recommended under the following circumstances:

- ✓ You are unable to use a lift (stair-lift or through-floor lift) to access existing upstairs facilities.
- ✓ It is not structurally feasible to provide a lift.
- ✓ Existing upstairs facilities cannot be adapted to make them suitable for your long-term needs.
- ✓ All space within the existing footprint of the property will always be used where possible when considering ground floor adaptations

4.7 Ground Floor or First Floor Toilet

An extra toilet will be recommended under the following circumstances:

- ✓ Medical evidence indicates access to a toilet near to you is required due to long term continence issues.
- ✓ You are unable to use the stairs or a lift without carer support and are alone for periods of time throughout the day or night.
- ✓ You can use the stairs or lift independently during the day but are at increased risk of injury when using at night.
- ✓ Medical evidence indicates that you are unable to share a toilet facility with others due to behaviours that challenge, cognitive dysfunction or other hidden disabilities.

Notes

- Extra toilets are not provided to assist with toilet training regimes or for home improvements.

4.8 Level Access Shower

A level access shower facility will be recommended under the following circumstances:

- ✓ You are unable to access your bath even with bathing equipment.
- ✓ Provision of a level access shower will increase your independence and reduce the need for informal or formal carer support with bathing.
- ✓ You are currently able to access your bath with bathing equipment, but you have a progressive condition meaning a level access shower would better meet your long-term needs.
- ✓ You have a condition which puts you at significant risk from using existing facilities such as epilepsy or cognitive impairment.
- ✓ You display behaviours that challenge which put you and/ or your caregivers at significant risk of injury using existing facilities.

4.9 Shower over Bath

A shower over the bath will be recommended under the following circumstances:

- ✓ You can transfer in and out of the bath with bathing equipment in-situ AND
- ✓ Your condition is unlikely to deteriorate significantly AND
- ✓ You require access to a shower for emergency situations or cannot reach to wash your own hair.

4.10 Specialist Baths

Specialist baths will be recommended under the following circumstances:

- ✓ You have an identified sensory need for bathing which is recorded in a sensory plan. You are a disabled child who requires a specialist bath to support your development.
- ✓ You meet one of the above criteria and require a height adjustable bath to support hoist transfers and/ or reduce manual handling risks to carers.

Notes

- Standard baths are not provided, either as a replacement for your existing bath, or in place of a level access shower. The exception to this is where there is an identified sensory need requiring bathing, which is recorded in a sensory plan and there are no physical needs
- Walk-in baths are not provided as these are not recognised as accessible facilities due to the number of contra-indications to use.

4.11 Wash and Dry Toilet

A wash and dry toilet will be recommended under the following circumstances:

- ✓ You have difficulty managing your own toilet hygiene and provision of a wash and dry toilet will increase your independence and prevent, reduce or delay the need for informal or formal carer support with toileting.

Notes

- A wash and dry toilet may not be recommended with some medical conditions, particularly if you have a cognitive impairment or sensory issues as you may not be able to tolerate the wash and dry functions
- A wash/dry toilet will not be recommended if it is considered age appropriate for parents/carers to support with post toilet hygiene

4.12 Kitchen Adaptations

Access to kitchen adaptations will be recommended under the following circumstances:

- ✓ You are a wheelchair user and have a primary responsibility for the preparation of food for self/others in the household and / or would be required to prepare light meals or drinks.
- ✓ You have a visual impairment and have a primary responsibility for the preparation of food for self/others in the household and / or would be required to prepare light meals or drinks.

Notes

- The whole kitchen will not be adapted as standard, partial use of a kitchen will be recommended if this will meet long term needs. Standard white goods are not provided.
- Specialist ovens and hobs will be recommended only where this will reduce risk and promote independence with kitchen tasks. For example, if you are visually-impaired and/ or a wheelchair user requiring eye level or hide and slide ovens.

4.13 Heating and Cooling Systems

Access to heating / cooling systems will be recommended you under the following circumstances:

- ✓ No existing heating system in your home to meet your needs.
- ✓ Limited indoor mobility and need to maintain reasonable body temperature.
- ✓ A specific medical condition that directly affects your body temperature or a condition that would be exacerbated by uneven room temperatures.
- ✓ Loss of sensation / inability to recognise temperature changes because of your medical condition.
- ✓ A condition causing you to be a danger to yourself or others when using the existing heating system.
- ✓ You need to use a ground floor room as a bedroom and the existing gas appliance contradicts gas regulations.

Notes

- Heating and cooling systems will not be provided in rooms which are not normally used by you.

4.14 Control of Power, Light and Heat

Access to environmental controls will be recommended in the following circumstances:

- ✓ You are unable to use conventional controls due to your long-term health condition and provision of environmental controls would increase your independence and prevent, reduce or delay the need for formal or informal care.

4.15 Dropped Kerb and Hard Standing

Dropped kerb and hard standing will be provided under the following circumstances:

- ✓ You are the main driver, and you cannot get from your house to the roadside to access your car.
- ✓ You are at risk of injury transferring in/ out of your car to your wheelchair or walking equipment at the roadside.
- ✓ You require 1:1 support as you lack insight into your own personal safety and are unsafe to access your car by the roadside.

Notes

- Hard standing and dropped kerbs will generally not be provided due to roadside parking difficulties. You will be signposted to apply for a blue badge.
- Dropped kerbs will not be provided where a hard standing already exists. You will be signposted to the Highways department to make an application.

4.16 Ceiling Track Hoist

A ceiling track hoist will be recommended under the following circumstances:

- ✓ Provision of a ceiling track hoist will promote independence and prevent, reduce or delay the need for formal or informal care.
- ✓ Hoisting is required and the use of a mobile/or “gantry” hoist is not recommended due to limited space or risk of injury carers.

4.17 Safe Environment (Internal)

A safe environment is a safe protective area, or adaptations specifically aimed at reducing risk of harm to you in your home or garden due to additional needs arising as a result of a disability or enduring illness.

The Council will take a multi-agency approach when considering adaptations to provide a safe environment. You must have had intervention from relevant health care professionals and have engaged in and implemented any plans set out to manage behaviours that challenge.

Major adaptations will only be considered if:

- The multi-agency team agrees they are the least restrictive course of action
- And all recommended management plans have been unsuccessful
- And the person remains at risk or a risk to others in the household.

A safe environment or bespoke adaptations may be recommended under the following circumstances:

- ✓ You have assessed sensory needs, and a sensory plan is in place which has identified the need for a safe environment within your home.
- ✓ You lack insight into your own personal safety and require non-standard fencing in your garden to make it secure.
- ✓ You continue to exhibit behaviours that challenge despite management plans in place, putting yourself and others at significant risk, and require bespoke adaptations to improve yours and/ or others safety. This includes provision of an extra bedroom for your sole use.

4.17 Safe access to garden

Adaptations will be considered to enable the disabled person to access the garden for the purpose of drying clothes, playing or supervising play and gardening.

Note

- Safe access refers to adaptations such as rails and ramps, the maintenance of a garden is the responsibility of the tenant/home owner.
- The local authority will make a decision on what is reasonable and practicable when considering the size of an accessible or safe space in a garden based on the persons individual eligible needs

Notes

- **We do not provide equipment or adaptations that are identified as a health need, eg sensory rooms, additional storage, room for educational or therapy purposes**

APPENDIX 1 – COSTS OF ADAPTATIONS AND EQUIPMENT

Adaptation	Costs of Adaptations by Home Ownership			
	Council Tenant	Owner Occupier	Housing Association	Private Rent
All Approved Major Adaptations (Excluding extensions)	No Cost to you. Funded by Sheffield City Council Housing Department	See Private Sector Housing Policy	See Private Sector Housing Policy	See Private Sector Housing Policy
Household extensions	No Cost to you. Funded by Sheffield City Council Housing Department	See Private Sector Housing Policy	See Private Sector Housing Policy	See Private Sector Housing Policy

APPENDIX 2 - STATUTORY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- ✓ Equality Act 2010 - The Equality Act defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. A long-term effect refers to impairments that have lasted at least 12 months, or the effects of which will last for at least 12 months, or which are likely to last for the remainder of a person's life.
- ✓ Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 - The legislation which sets out the duty and rules for providing mandatory Disabled Facility Grants.
- ✓ Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) delivery: Guidance for Local Authorities in England 2022 - Advice and guidance for local authorities on how to deliver DFG funded adaptations effectively and efficiently.
- ✓ Care Act 2014 - The legislation which sets out how adult social care in England should be provided.
- ✓ Sheffield City Council Private Sector Housing Policy - The policy which sets out the rules on how the council allocates grants to people living in private sector housing.