



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Adaptations in Your Home

A Guide for Council Tenants



We are committed to ensuring that aids and adaptations are accessible to our tenants. We will do everything reasonably possible to ensure that our tenants can live independently in their homes for as long as possible.

Adapting or providing aids for your home can make it easier for you to remain independent, they can also help you move around indoors or outdoors more easily.

We work in partnership with agencies such as Occupational Therapists and the NHS to ensure

that we carry out effective, long-term adaptations that meet our tenants current and future needs, provide value for money and help us make efficient use of our stock.

If you or someone living in your property are seeking adaptations to your Council home this guide will explain how you can apply, how we can help and what the process is.

We may not always be able to adapt your current home, but we will work with you and support you throughout the whole process.

What are adaptations?

Adaptations and aids can provide assistance to tenants who have a disability or are experiencing difficulty getting around their home. Adaptations can enable people to live in their current home as long as possible to enjoy independent living, privacy, and dignity.

We may be able to help Darlington Borough Council tenants by adapting their homes if:

- You or a member of your household has difficulty getting around your home or going in or out.

- You have difficulty getting up or down the stairs.
- You find it difficult to use the existing facilities in your home such as the bath or toilet.

What we do will depend on your circumstances.

In every case current and future needs of our tenants and their household members will be considered.

What type of adaptations can Housing Services do?

Alterations and adaptations can range from minor adaptations such as fitting lever taps or fixing grab rails, through to larger works such as replacing outside steps with a ramp or fitting a level access shower.

In some cases we may consider building an extension, although this is the exception rather than the rule. It may be better for us to work with you to find alternative accommodation to meet your needs.

Whatever we do needs to be reasonable, practicable and meet the current and future needs of tenants.



How do I apply for adaptations to my home?

You should apply directly to the Occupational Therapist (OT) team who will carry out an assessment on you and your property.

They will then arrange to meet with our Adaptations Panel to discuss any adaptations needed.

Contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

Who can apply?

All Council tenants with a secure tenancy can apply for home adaptations. For tenants with exceptional circumstances, we may be able to help within the first 12 months of the tenancy.

We are unable to fund adaptations to Shared Ownership properties, owner occupiers need to apply directly to the Occupational Therapist team direct who would give more advice.

Why do I need an OT assessment?

An Occupational Therapist will assess the suitability of your home for your current and future needs. They will recommend any aids or adaptations required to the property directly to Housing Services.

When requesting an OT assessment, it is important to give them as much detail as you can about the difficulties you are having.



What is the process after my adaptations have been agreed?

- **Step 1 - Assessment** - An OT will carry out an initial assessment with you at your home. They will consider what your current and future needs are, and write a report detailing this.
- **Step 2 - Design** - The OT will provide recommendations about the type of work required and discuss design options with you and us. The proposed work must be possible, necessary & appropriate, reasonable and practicable.
- **Step 3 - Tenancy check** - The Housing Building Surveying team may need to carry out further inspections of your home to assess if the property can be adapted, your Housing Tenancy Management Officer may also need to visit you. The visits may include an asbestos survey and a technical pre-inspection of your home.
- **Step 4 - Panel decision** - The OT team and Officers from the Housing Building Surveying team and Housing Tenancy Management team will consider the recommendations for adaptations on a case by case basis. In making their decision they will consider the following:
 - i. The availability of other suitable accommodation within the Borough.
 - ii. An individual's circumstances and local connections.
 - iii. Your future and current needs.
 - iv. The location of the property.
 - v. The suitability of the property for adaptation.
 - vi. Accessibility.
 - vii. The cost of adaptation.
- If we are unable to carry out the adaptation, or the request is refused we will arrange for your Housing Tenancy Management Officer to visit you and support you around the next steps, this may include considering alternative accommodation which could better meet your needs. They will also advise you on how you can appeal the decision if you feel the panel have not considered all information appropriately and the decision was unjustified.
- **Step 5 - Getting the work done** - If your adaptations are agreed we will arrange the repairs with either our internal Housing Building Maintenance team or an approved contractor. We will make you aware of any appointments and any items, furniture or carpets that will need to be moved. We will give you estimated time for the completion of works.
- **Step 6** - You will be sent a support plan and an OT will make contact or visit you in your home to ensure the work is suitable for your needs. You will also be asked to complete a satisfaction survey so we can learn from any issues and any outstanding problems are addressed.



How long will it all take?

We aim to have the aid or adaptation to your home completed within the following timescale targets based on your assessment of need:

- **Minor works** (costing less than £1000) - 4 weeks from initial request.
- **Major works** (where quote required) - Completed within 12 weeks of funding approval.
- **Specialist equipment** (stair lift/ hoisting equipment) works - Complicated adaptation work may require specialist technical support or approval from Building Control which may delay completion.

We will keep you informed throughout the process.

What happens if you cannot adapt my current home to meet my needs?

There may be occasions where your home may not be suitable for adaptations, or where we are unable to complete adaptations to your home that will meet your current and future needs and where we have other properties that will meet your needs.

We will always discuss other options with you such as re-housing you into a property that is

more suitable for your needs or can be more readily adapted.



What help will you give me if I need to move house because my cannot be adapted?

We will offer you support around moving and, in some cases, may be able to direct match you to a property that better suits your current and future needs.

A Housing Tenancy Management Officer will come and visit you in your home and talk you through the options, help you to complete a HomeSearch application form and give you any advice you need.

How do I appeal your decision?

If you are unhappy with the panel decision you have the right to appeal through the appeals process.

All appeals should be submitted in writing to us within 21 days of you receiving your decision letter. You should submit any evidence you feel appropriate to the Head of Housing, Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington, DL1 5QT. You should state your reasons why you feel the decision was unjustified, together with any other information you feel will support your appeal and that you wish to bring to our attention.

You also have the right to complain if you are not satisfied with the way Housing Services have handled your request for service. You can make a complaint by:

- Using our online complaints form (https://selfserve.darlington.gov.uk/form/auto/complaints_compliments)
- Emailing: **complaints@darlington.gov.uk**
- Call the Complaints and Information Governance team on **01325 406777**
- Visiting us at the Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT*

*please note all face to face appointments should be pre-booked

You can also contact the Housing Ombudsman.

You can contact them at:

Housing Ombudsman Service

Po Box 152
Liverpool
L33 7WQ

Telephone: **0300 111 3000**

Fax: **020 7831 1942**

Email: **info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk**

Website: **www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk**



Contact details

You can contact and find out more about Housing Services in the following ways:

Through our website: **www.darlington.gov.uk/housing**

By telephone: **01325 405333**

By email: **housing@darlington.gov.uk**

Through your digital tenancy **<https://housing.darlington.gov.uk/MyAccount/www/login>**

You can also contact and find out more about the OT team in the following ways:

Through their website **<https://www.darlington.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adult-services/living-independently/adaptations-and-equipment/>**

By telephone: **01325 406111**



