

Home adaptations and specialist equipment

Our guidelines 2023

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INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are based on the recommendations made in the Scottish Government [‘Guidance on the Provision of Equipment and Adaptations’](#), which is a statutory guidance under the **Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014**.

The guidelines aim to support people who need advice, equipment or changes to their home to be able to live independently.

They aim to:

- Make the process of providing equipment and adaptations consistent and equitable.
- Ensure you, your family and carers are at the centre of provision.
- Enable you, your family and carers to have choice and control in the process of assessment and support planning and have up to date and relevant information.

This document explains who we support and what types of equipment and adaptations we provide.



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Who we support

We provide equipment and adaptations for people at risk who meet the following criteria.

1. You are disabled as defined in the [Disability Discrimination Act](#).

You're disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

2. You live in Midlothian as defined in [Midlothian's Policy Statement, Ordinary Residence. Care Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

3. You need support with everyday tasks and without this support there is a 'critical' or 'substantial' risk to your safety, health and independence.

This means one of our staff have assessed that you need support and without this support there is a high risk that you will come to harm and won't be able to do essential everyday tasks.

This could mean you might not be able to eat healthily, go to the toilet, wash or dress yourself and stay safe.

A full definition of 'critical' or 'substantial' risk is in [Midlothian Council's Eligibility Criteria for service provision](#).



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What happens when you contact us?

- If you feel that equipment or an adaptation to your home could help, you can call us on **0131 271 3900** Monday - Thursday 9am - 5pm, Friday 9am - 4pm
- One of the team will ask you some questions to find out how we can help.
- If you are eligible for support, you will be added to a waiting list – how long you will have to wait depends on how urgent your need is and how many other people are waiting.
- If your situation changes while you are waiting, please call us again.
- One of our team will arrange a time to come and visit you at home. If they think that an adaptation to your house or some equipment could help you, they will talk you through the next steps. They may need to apply for funding or approval from Midlothian Council and you may need to go on a waiting list again.

Choice and Self-Directed Support

You should be given as much choice as possible about your preferred solution as long as it is feasible, does not add to the cost and meets the outcomes identified by our assessment.

Self Directed-Support options may be available in some circumstances; cases will be considered on an individual basis



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Understanding your needs now and in the future

An important part of our assessment is understanding what is important to you and how you support yourself in your day-to-day life. This is known as self-management, and it is one of the Scottish Government's Health and Wellbeing priorities.

In line with Scottish Government recommendations, we will look for the **minimum intervention to help you achieve maximum independence**. This means that we will provide the minimal safe adaptations to support you to maintain an optimal degree of independence.

We will look at ways to help you help yourself as much as you can, supporting you to maintain or improve your abilities. This means that sometimes we will recommend exercise as well as lifestyle changes or refer you on to other services who can support you.

We will aim to provide equipment that supports you to maintain the physical ability you have rather than equipment that might reduce your levels of physical activity.

We will talk to you about:

- What's important to you and your carers.
- What you are able to do.
- Anything you are worried about.
- Any risks to you being able to live independently both now and in the future.
- Any support you have (both paid and unpaid).
- Your religious and cultural beliefs and practices.

We may need to speak to your medical professional, with your permission, to help us understand your long-term needs, and those of your carer.

Life limiting illness: We might not recommend an adaptation if we will not be able to complete it in time to provide you with significant benefit.

Short-term condition: We will not fund an adaptation if your symptoms are likely to improve in less than 12 months.

If you have a short-term condition that is likely to continue for more than 12 months we will usually only provide advice or equipment.

Recovery after surgery: We will not fund an adaptation if you are due to have surgery or are in an active rehabilitation programme as your function should hopefully improve. We may review your situation following your surgery.

Changes in circumstance: We will recommend removing any equipment and adaptations if, following a re-assessment, there is considerable risk to you and/or your carers.

Going on holiday: We will not provide equipment as we are unable to safely assess the environment.



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Assessing your home

The Scottish Government requires us to discuss alternative housing options at the earliest possible opportunity.

If your home is not going to be suitable to meet your long-term needs, you may need to look at alternative housing as we will NOT adapt your home.

We will NOT adapt your home:

- If health and safety regulations mean we cannot do this safely;
- If we cannot find a cost-effective solution;
- If your home is scheduled for demolition or in a state of serious disrepair;
- If you live in a static caravan;
- If you are looking to move home;
- If you move from a home which has been adapted for you to a home which needs to be adapted;
- If you move into a home that has been adapted for someone else, we will not remove the adaptation;
- If you don't have basic amenities (e.g. toilets or sinks) we will not provide these;
- If you live in rented accommodation and your landlord can offer you an alternative home that meets your needs;
- We will not provide alternative heating or alterations to heating systems.

Additional rooms & extensions

We will always consider other options before recommending an additional room or extension. These might include:

- Moving to a more suitable home.
- Stair lifts or through floor lifts.
- Altering existing space – e.g. if you have a large downstairs bathroom and large sitting room we may be able to use this space to create a bedroom. A 'Showerloo Cubicle' could also offer a potential solution within a downstairs bedroom space if you do not have a downstairs toilet/bathroom. An extension for a bathroom will only be considered if your bathroom is not accessible, there is not enough space to make it suitable and alternatives such as a commode or chemical toilet are inappropriate.

If an additional room or extension is recommended, we will work with the architect and the Housing Team (for Council tenants), the Housing Association (for Housing Association tenants) and Environmental Health (if you own your home).



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If you live in more than one home

- If you are cared for permanently in two settings on a regular basis, and you are a resident in Midlothian for a substantial part of each year, we will consider adapting your property in Midlothian.
- If you make significant use of two properties in Midlothian, we will consider adaptations for your own home first. We will not recommend major adaptations for your second property.
- If the service user is a child who regularly resides equally between two family homes, adaptations may be considered in both properties.
- If you move to further or higher education, we can make recommendations for adaptations to your new landlord but we will not provide these.
- We will adapt the home of a disabled child who is fostered if the child is a client of the Council, whether or not the long-term foster placement is in Midlothian. If a disabled child is adopted, the Authority where the adopting parents live are responsible for adaptations and equipment.

Getting help moving

If you live in a council house you can contact the Housing Services Team who can help you find a suitable house.

0131 271 3394

housing.enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk

You may also find our housing guide useful.



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Permissions, Maintenance & Decorating

The homeowner/landlord must give permission for any adaptation, and if it is for a communal area we will need permission from the other homeowners/landlords.

Maintenance and removal of all equipment and/or adaptations are the responsibility of the home owner/landlord – this includes any associated decorating.

The exception to this is Ceiling Track Hoist systems - see relevant section.



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Funding

Funding for major adaptations depends on who owns your home.

- If you own your home or rent a home privately, we may be able to support you to apply for a Home Improvement Grant.

To apply, an Occupational Therapist from Health and Social Care must agree the work in writing.

- If you live in a Council or Housing Association property the landlord will normally fund the adaptation.

If you are a Council tenant and are in rent arrears we will consult with Housing before agreeing to an adaptation.

We will always recommend the most cost-effective solution. If you would like a more expensive option, you are responsible for paying for the extra cost.

We do not provide small equipment which is widely available to purchase such as small kitchen aides, bathing aides or shoehorns. We also do not provide portable safes for medication.

We may be able to provide you with a list of charitable organisations and grants that may be able to support you.

You can also contact **0131 271 3900** and ask to be referred to our Welfare Rights Team to ensure you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to.



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OUTSIDE

Paths

- ✓ If you use a wheelchair and a path in your property is unsafe for you to use we will make the path safe so you can access the community.
- ✗ We will not fit rails along paths as it is expected you will use mobility equipment if you have difficulty walking along the path. It is the responsibility of the homeowner/landlord to provide, repair or replace existing rails.
- ✗ We will not create a path to access features in the garden such as a washing line.

Driveways & driving

It may not always be possible to create a driveway due to planning or traffic regulations.

- ✓ We will create a driveway if you are a driver, have a Blue Badge and are unable to walk or self-propel a wheelchair to the car parked at the kerb.
- ✓ We will create a driveway if you are a passenger, hold a Blue Badge and have a substantial and permanent disability or challenging behaviour that would cause a risk to your safety and your carer is unable to support you safely to and from the car parked at the kerb.
- ✓ We will drop the kerb as part of creating a driveway. If you are creating a driveway the homeowner/landlord will need to seek permission from Road Services to drop the kerb for you.
- ✗ We will not create a driveway if you are a passenger and do not meet the above criteria. An able-bodied driver can 'double park' to pick you up or drop you off at your house. Although this may be a short-term obstruction of the highway, it is neither 'unnecessary' nor 'wilful' so is unlikely to be an offence.
- ✗ We will not create a driveway as a way to prevent vandalism.
- ✗ We will not create a driveway solely to reduce the distance from home to car or to alleviate on-street parking congestion.
- ✗ We will not provide gates for driveways.
- ✗ We will not provide painted road markings (disabled parking bay).
- ✗ We will not provide adaptations to cars, provide car seats and/or car harnesses
- ✗ We will not provide storage for wheelchairs and scooters.



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Access Steps

- ✓ We will alter steps at ONE access point to your house.
- ✓ We will make steps wider or shallower to make them easier to use. We will need written permission from other owners if the steps provide access to a communal area.
- ✗ We will not modify steps if you have a medical condition which is likely to deteriorate.

Rails at the door

- ✓ We will fit one rail to ONE entrance only. We will fit two rails if you are at significant risk without support on both sides.
- ✓ We may consider a second rail at another entrance to access a washing line or bins if you don't have anyone else who can help with this.

Ramps

- ✓ We will only consider a ramp if you meet the criteria for a wheelchair from the NHS.
- ✓ We will only fit a ramp to ONE entrance, at the most cost effective point.
- ✓ We will only fit a ramp if all the main areas of your house are, or can be, wheelchair accessible.

- ✗ We will not fit a ramp if you can negotiate steps into your home, on your own, with equipment or with a carer.
- ✗ We will not fit a ramp, shelter or charging facilities for a battery powered scooter which has been bought privately.

A building warrant may be needed to fit or remove a ramp. The homeowner/landlord is responsible for getting this.

Stemplifts – a platform lift to replace a short flight of stairs.

- ✓ We will fit a steplift if we cannot fit a ramp due to steep gradient, lack of space or it is not cost effective.
- ✓ We will fit a steplift if you or your carer can safely operate it now and in the future.
- ✓ We will fit a steplift if all the main areas of your house can be wheelchair accessible.
- ✗ We will not fit a steplift if we have concerns about vandalism or maintenance costs.

Gates

- ✗ We will not fit external fences and/or external gates

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FRONT DOOR

Keysafe & Locks

- ✓ We will fit a keysafe (a secure storage box for keys accessed via a keypad) as part of a full telecare package. These are usually attached to an external wall of your home.
- ✓ We will fit a keysafe if you are alone for long periods each day and can't open your door to let in someone who supports you.
- ✓ We will fit a keysafe at your front door if you can open a communal door using an intercom but can't open your own front door.
- ✗ We will not fit a keysafe to the external wall of a sheltered housing complex or block of flats with a door entry system.
- ✗ We will not fit a keysafe for short term or occasional use. A portable keysafe can be arranged and will be removed when it is no longer required.
- ✗ We will not provide a lock – this is the responsibility of the homeowner/landlord

Entry phone

- ✓ We will fit an entryphone (an intercom system to speak to visitors at the door and remotely open an external door and/or door to an apartment). if you are alone for long periods each day and can't open your door to let in care staff.
- ✗ We will not fit an entryphone if you are not able to use it safely and may allow people you don't know into your home.

Door opening device

- ✓ We will fit a door opening device (a radio controlled device that can unlock, open and close a door) if you are physically unable to open or close a door and can operate the device safely.
- ✓ We will fit a door opening device if you are alone for long periods each day and need to come and go into your property independently.

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STAIRS

Bannisters

The homeowner/landlord is responsible for ensuring internal stairs have one bannister.

- ✓ We will replace a bannister if there is only one and it does not offer suitable support.
- ✓ We will add a bannister if you need support on both sides.

Stairlift

- ✓ We will fit a stairlift (a powered lift that transports you over a set of stairs in a seated or supported position) if you cannot use stair, even with a walking aid or additional bannister or if your carer is at risk due to the amount of help you need to use the stairs.
- ✓ We will fit a stairlift if you can use it safely on your own or with a carer who lives with you.
- ✓ We will fit a stairlift if it is an appropriate and cost-effective way to access your bedroom and bathroom upstairs.
- ✓ We will fit a stairlift if, according to health and safety standards, there is enough space at the top and bottom of the stairs for you to get on and off the lift, either on your own or with support.

✗ We will not fit a stairlift if you can use a downstairs rooms as a bedroom and bathroom.

✗ We will not fit a stairlift on a common stair.

If we have to move or remove a radiator or bannister to fit a stairlift we will seek support for the cost of this either through your landlord or the Home Improvement Grant. The cost of redecoration will not be supported where the radiator or bannister was originally placed. This remains the responsibility of the homeowner/landlord.

If the stairlift is subsequently removed, the radiator will not be re-sited to its original position. Provision for replacing floor coverings or redecoration will remain the responsibility of the homeowner/landlord.

Any costs incurred due to redecoration or replacing carpet on the stairs while the stairlift is in situ will be the responsibility of the homeowner/landlord.

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Stairclimber

- ✓ We will provide a stairclimber (a mobile transporter to move you up or down stairs, either in a wheelchair or a seat on the stair climber operated by a carer) if you cannot use stairs, even with a walking aid or additional bannister or if your carer is at risk due to the amount of help you need to use the stairs.
- ✓ We will provide a stairclimber if you have a carer who can operate it for you – and will be able to do so for the foreseeable future. We will fund one formal training session and your carer must be able to show they are able to use the equipment at the end of this session.
- ✓ We may review the equipment to check you and your carer can still use it safely. If we have any concerns, we will remove the stairclimber.

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Lift

- ✓ We may fit a lift that can transport you between the floors of a building, if you cannot use stairs and a stairlift is not suitable.
- ✓ We will fit a lift if you can use it safely on your own or with a carer now and in the future.
- ✓ We will fit a lift if it is an appropriate and cost-effective way to access your bedroom and bathroom upstairs.
- ✓ We will fit a lift if you have a public room on the ground floor and space on the upper floor for the lift – including space for safe entrance and exit from the lift. We will consider the accessibility and internal layout of your house and the feasibility of additional adaptations which might be required.
- ✗ We will not fit a lift if you can use downstairs rooms as a bedroom and bathroom.

NOTE: If you own your house or rent it

privately, we may support you to apply for a Home Improvement Grant to pay for the lift to be installed. The lift will then become the property of the owner and they are responsible to maintain and remove it and redecorate.

If you live in a Council property, we will remove the lift when it is no longer required. The ceiling and upper floor will be repaired but we will not redecorate the area.

If you live in a Housing Association property you will need to check their policies about redecoration.

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HOISTS & FURNITURE

Hoists

- ✓ We will only fit a powered hoist suspended from a track attached to the ceiling or a frame if a mobile hoist or equipment is unsuitable.
- ✗ We will not fit a ceiling track hoist if there is not enough space to safely do so. There must be sufficient circulation space for carers to safely support as and when required, or you to complete safe independent transfer.
- ✓ Midlothian Council will service and maintain Ceiling Track Hoists for free every 6 months for people living in council and privately owned properties.
- ✓ Housing associations will be responsible for servicing and maintaining any Ceiling Track Hoist within their properties.
- ✗ Midlothian Council will NOT remove or repair broken Ceiling Track hoists.

Specialist Chairs

- ✓ We will only provide a specialist chair if a rise/recline chair is unsuitable.
- ✓ We will provide a specialist chair to provide postural support and if you require maximum assistance or hoisting to transfer from the chair.
- ✓ We will also provide one if nursing needs such as pressure care cannot be met using a rise recliner chair
- ✓ We only provide rise recline chairs for people who are end of life care.
- ✗ Specialist chairs would not usually be considered for children under 18 months unless available from the community equipment service.
- ✗ We do not provide floor fixing furniture or robust specialist chairs for those with challenging behaviour.

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BATHROOMS

Toilet Seat or Frame

- ✓ We will provide equipment such as a toilet seat or frame to maintain your safety and independence.

Rails

- ✓ We will fit a rail beside a toilet if a toilet seat or frame is not suitable or we assess that this is required for your safety.

Specialist Toilet

- ✓ We will fit a specialist toilet if you cannot clean yourself after using the toilet even with the help of a carer or cleaning aids.
- ✗ We will not fit a specialist toilet unless you have tried one with similar features and an Occupational Therapist has assessed it to be the only appropriate solution.

Showers

We will use wall boards to provide a waterproof covering in the shower area. If you would prefer tiles, we can provide the equivalent cost of wall boards to be used towards the cost of slip resistant tiles.

These arrangements will be made directly with the contractor through the architect involved in the adaptation. If your room is already fully tiled, we will use the most cost-effective solution to ensure that the area immediately next to the shower is fully waterproof when existing tiles are disturbed.

- ✗ We will not cover or redecorate areas outwith the immediate shower area. Housing Associations will provide wall coverings according to their policies and practice.

Overbath Showers

- ✓ We will fit an overbath shower if your carer is at risk when helping you in the bath
- ✓ We will fit an overbath shower if other members of the household need to use a bath.
- ✗ We will not fit an overbath shower if there is a significant risk associated with bathing and submersion in water.

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Wet Floor Shower

This is when the floor in your bathroom is formed to slope towards a drain and covered in non-slip flooring. The area can be surrounded by a full-length shower curtain or half height doors if assessed as suitable and safe by a professional.

- ✓ If you currently have a bath - we will fit a wet floor shower if equipment has been tried and does not enable you to have a bath safely, even with support from your carer. This could be because of a significant medical or behavioural risk associated with bathing and submersion in water is not recommended. This must be confirmed by a medical practitioner in writing.
- ✓ If you currently have a shower - we will fit a wet floor shower if you have a shower cubicle which you cannot access, and we cannot make it accessible with equipment.
- ✗ We will not fit a wet floor shower in an upstairs bathroom if the rest of your house is unsuitable for your long-term needs.

Specialist bath

We do not provide specialist baths.

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KITCHENS

- ✓ We will modify your kitchen if you are a wheelchair user and/or have substantial and permanent mobility problems and your kitchen is not suitable for your needs.
- ✓ We will reuse/adapt existing kitchen units where possible.
- ✓ We will fit accessible overhead units if we cannot re-site white goods or utensils lower down.
- ✓ The extent of the adaptation will depend on who is the predominant user of the kitchen. If you only use the kitchen minimally, we may only support access to the kitchen, and a single accessible work surface.

If you are the predominant user of the kitchen, we will support access to the sink, oven, hob and one work surface.

We will support mechanical devices to raise and lower kitchen surfaces only when all other options have been explored and there are other people, who are predominant users of the kitchen, that require a different height of kitchen surface.

- ✓ We will fit a splash guard around the sink and cooker using the most cost-effective option. If you would like a more expensive solution or other decorative options, you will be required to pay the difference in cost.
- ✗ We will not cover the cost of replacement white goods or domestic appliances – only the cost of the alterations.
- ✗ We will not support a kitchen adaptation to manage safety or behavioural needs.

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SAFETY

Glazing/Glass

- ✓ We will apply a protective film to window or doors if you are at risk due to glass panels.
- ✓ We will replace glass with a different material or reinforced/toughened glass for the minimum number of windows and doors in area of high risk if your challenging behaviour puts yourself or carers in danger.

Internal gates (wood/metal)

- ✓ We will fit a gate if you are at risk of wandering into a hazardous area inside your house if safety gates do not meet this need – e.g. near stairs.
- ✗ We will not provide safety gates
- ✗ We will not provide gates for a child if others of similar age would normally require a safety gate for safe supervision.

Fire/Radiator Guards

- ✗ We will not provide fire/radiator guards.
- ✗ We will not complete adaptations for the sole purpose to support fire evacuation. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service are able to offer a free home safety check and consultation.

Locks

- ✗ We will not provide locks; this is the responsibility of the homeowner/landlord.

Cars

- ✗ We will not provide adaptations to cars, car seats or harnesses.

Safe spaces

- ✗ We will not provide robust furniture, alternative flooring or safe spaces.