

Aids and Adaptations in Cornwall

Help & Advice

How to contact us

Customer Services Team
0300 3038030

Lines are open from 9.00 am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday.
Fax: 01736 331647 E-mail: contact@penwithha.org.uk
Typetalk: 18001 01736331799 Minicom: 0800 0277014
TEXT: 07797 800079

Or visit us online at: www.penwithha.org.uk

Repairs Hotline:
0300 3038070

PHA Emergency Line:
0300 3038070 (5.00pm - 9.00am)

Penzance Office:
67 Morrab Road, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 2QJ

Truro Office:
Kenwyn Street, Truro, Cornwall TR1 3BA

***Leaflets available in large print,
audio, and other languages.***

Developing and managing homes in Cornwall since 1994, Penwith Housing Association became part of the Devon and Cornwall Housing Group in 2005. We work alongside Tor Homes and Devon and Cornwall Housing Association (DCHA) to build upon the best of all our organisations. As well as our own properties, we also manage homes in Cornwall on behalf of DCHA.

We are working hard to make sure our information leaflets are suitable for DCHA and PHA customers in Cornwall. There is still some more work to be done and some details in our leaflets may not always be relevant to all. Please contact your neighbourhood housing officer or the customer services team if you have any questions.



better homes

better places

better lives



Aids and Adaptations

PHA and DCHA have set up a forum which includes PHA and DCHA tenants and staff. The purpose of the group is to review and develop the aids and adaptations service. The interaction between staff and tenants will help to identify improvements to the service.

Getting advice

We manage each resident's adaptation application and are available to offer advice when needed.

If you are having difficulties within your home and think that you need help in coping with some of the physical aspects of everyday living, such as: bathing, going up steps and stairs, or using your present heating system, you should contact us and ask to speak to a member of the aids and adaptations team.

Major adaptations

You will be given advice on how to make a request for an assessment by an occupational therapist from the Department of Adult Care and Support (formerly known as social services). For major adaptations a form will be sent for you to complete and return to the requested address.

If you wish to employ your own independent occupational therapist, you can do so. We can provide you with some contacts for this purpose. You should note, however, that you will be required to pay them as per their individual terms and conditions before an assessment can take place. If you are eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant, you will be reimbursed your fees (up to a maximum of £200) by Cornwall Council.

Assessment process

Your form will be assessed by the Department of Adult Care and Support and you will be placed on their waiting list to be seen by an occupational therapist. This waiting list can be lengthy and your position on the list is determined by medical need, not on a 'first come, first served' basis.

An occupational therapist will visit you in your home to assess your medical condition and to assess your home environment. They will then make a written recommendation to us, stating exactly what adaptations are required.

What happens next?

We will send you written confirmation that the recommendation has been received by PHA and we will also give you a guide as to when you can expect the work to start in your home. This is determined by how urgent the work is considered to be by the occupational therapist, for example:

- **urgent plus**
- **urgent**
- **routine**

The time target indicated to you would have been based on the advice of the Communities & Local Government department and agreed with other local agencies including: Cornwall Council; the Department of Adult Care and Support; Children, Schools and Families and West Cornwall Care & Repair. However, please note that whilst every effort is made by our staff and other agencies to meet the time targets, this is subject to funding and resources being available. In the event that these time targets are not achievable, we will make every effort to keep you informed and to reassess the situation accordingly.

A member of our disabled adaptations team will arrange a visit to your home to take measurements. A drawing will then be submitted to the relevant agencies for approval and quotations. We will also prepare the necessary application forms for a Disabled Facilities Grant, for which you will be asked to supply financial information.

Funding

Cornwall Council's Disabled Facilities Grant can be used for adaptations which will enable better freedom of movement into and around the home and/or to provide essential facilities within it. Acceptable types of work include: level access showers; widening of doors and installing ramps; providing or improving access to rooms and facilities, for example, stair lifts or providing a downstairs bathroom; adapting a heating system; adapting heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use and improving access to and movement around the home.

What is a 'Disabled Facilities Grant'?

A Disabled Facilities Grant is a central government grant system. It is administered and topped up by a local council grant to help towards the cost of adapting a home to enable people to continue to live there. A grant is paid when the council considers that changes are necessary to meet a person's needs and that the work is reasonable and practical.

Note: A landlord may apply on behalf of a disabled resident.

There is no means testing for families of disabled children under 19. Also, if you receive Guarantee Pension Credit, Income Support, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit (over 25% single occupancy allowance) you will not be means tested and will automatically qualify for a grant.

If none of the above exemption rules apply to you, a means test will be required. The amount of grant paid is dependent on the means test result. Means testing will take into account savings above £6000. Certain benefits including Disability Living Allowance are generally ignored. If you have a partner, your combined income will be assessed. Capital is included in the means test.

A range of premiums and allowances are used for all essential outgoings, for example, rent/mortgage and personal expenditure. Actual outgoings are not taken into consideration. Depending on the outcome of this assessment, the amount of financial assistance offered can vary from 0 to 100 per cent of the cost.

The award works as follows:

- if the income is less than the assessed need, you will not normally need to contribute to the cost of the works
- if the income is more than the assessed need, a proportion of the income will be used to calculate a contribution towards the cost of the works
- if this assessed amount is less than the cost of the works, the difference between the two is paid as a Disabled Facilities Grant.

The maximum amount of grant that a council is required to pay is £30,000 in England per application, less any assessed contribution from you. If the cost of the eligible works is more, the council can use discretionary powers to increase the amount. This grant will not affect any benefits you are currently receiving.

Starting work

Once the Disabled Facilities Grant has been approved by the council, we will book the work with our contractor, who is dedicated to carry out adaptations on your behalf. We will give you approximately six weeks notice in order for you to make any necessary arrangements before the work starts.

If you are having a specially adapted kitchen or level access shower installed and your current facilities don't meet the Decent Homes standard, we will replace those facilities at the same time as the adaptation works, which could include slip resistant flooring, enclosed light fittings, etc.

Completion

On completion of the work, a PHA clerk of works will visit your home to make sure that the work has been completed satisfactorily and that it is entirely suitable for your needs. As part of the adaptation process, we will ask for your feedback. We value the comments we receive as they allow us to monitor and continuously improve our service delivery. We encourage you to return your feedback form.

Minor adaptations

PHA technical and housing staff have received training by an independent occupational therapist to carry out minor work assessments. This means that tenants can apply direct to us for minor adaptations instead of approaching the Department of Adult Care and Support (DACs). However, you can still contact the DACs and request an assessment if you wish.

Requests for minor adaptations can be made in person, in writing, over the telephone or via our website. A PHA officer will contact you by telephone or in person to discuss your needs and what adaptations could be carried out to assist you.

Minor adaptations (under the value of £1000) are funded by our Minor Works Budget. Minor adaptations include grab rails, hand rails, stair rails, white lining of steps and level thresholds, to name but a few. A complete list of minor adaptations can be obtained from our adaptations team.

All minor adaptations will be completed within 28 calendar days from instruction to contractor. We use one main contractor for all of our adaptation work, however, there are instances where a specific profession is required and we will need to use alternative contractors. In these instances we will inform you of this.

Mechanical aids

If you receive a Disability Living Allowance or Mobility Allowance and choose to purchase an electrical vehicle, please be aware of the following:

- no assessment is made by the supplier of such vehicles for any alterations that may be required to the access to your home, or for its storage and battery charging
- the occupational therapist will upon request make an assessment of your needs which may result in a recommendation being made to us for a Disabled Facilities Grant. However, Cornwall Council do not provide funding for storage or charging facilities.

Please be aware that you may have to fund any alterations for these vehicles yourself.

You are strongly advised to make all enquiries relating to these vehicles before you commit to using your entitlements on them. Ask for advice from agencies such as the occupational therapy department at the Department of Adult Care and Support and our own adaptations team.

Complaints

If you have reason to be dissatisfied with the service you have received, please contact our adaptations team in the first instance, who will help to resolve any problems. In the event that you do not feel you have received a satisfactory outcome, we have a formal complaints procedure. For information about this or any other topic, please call our customer services team.

