

## **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK & HEALTH COMMITTEE – 25 JUNE 2007**

**REPORT ON: OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICE - CRITERIA FOR THE PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT AND ADAPTATIONS IN THE HOMES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK**

**REPORT NO: 700-2006**

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update and revise the criteria for the provision of equipment and adaptations in the homes of people with disabilities. To provide the basis of professional guidance to staff and for public information.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee approve the criteria proposed in Appendix A.

That the Director of Social Work arrange for this information to be available on the council's website and in other appropriate formats

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The cost of providing equipment and adaptations in the homes of people with disabilities will be met from within existing equipment and adaptation budgets.

### **4.0 SUSTAINABILITY POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

None

### **5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

The provisions contained in this report promote the independent and social inclusion of disabled people.

### **6.0 MAIN TEXT**

6.1 The Local Authority's duties in this regard are to be found primarily in Section 2 (1) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act (Scotland) 1970. This places a responsibility on the Local Authority for the provision of assistance in arranging for the carrying out of any works of adaptation in the person's home or for the provision of any additional facilities designed to secure greater safety, comfort or convenience. Criteria for the provision of equipment and adaptation has been set in place per Report Nos. 893-1997 and 210-2001 and maintained to ensure an equitable response and the optimal use of resources.

6.2 The criteria requires to be updated periodically in the light of developing practice, public expectation and changing council policy. It was recommended within the recent Best Value Review of the Occupational Therapy Service that the criteria be reviewed and updated.

6.3 The principal changes contained within this report are:

- to update the overall range of provision in the light of current standards of best practice.
- to detail the general considerations that will apply when considering any recommendations for equipment or adaptations.
- to make explicit the general principle that the overall suitability of the property for disabled persons will be taken into account when recommending adaptations.
- to increase the provision of special seating for disabled children and adults and recognized the wider range of options that are now available for this.
- to clarify and confirm the circumstances under which consideration will be given to the provision of stair lifts.
- to extend the provision of door entry systems to assist those who have certain types of mobility problems and to support the provision of care services.
- to specify the provision for people who have a hearing impairment.

## 7.0 CONSULTATIONS

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and the Director of Housing were consulted in the preparation of this report.

## 8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Alan G Baird  
Director of Social Work

Date: 15 June 2007

## **APPENDIX A**

### **CRITERIA FOR THE PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT (ADAPTATIONS IN THE HOMES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES)**

#### **1 Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to assist Social Work Department staff by providing guidelines relating to criteria for the provision of various types of equipment/adaptations in the homes of people with disabilities. It is the intention that this document will assist consistency of decision making by establishing common baselines throughout Dundee City Council. It replaces previous guidance. It also provides detailed information for the public.

- 1.2 The statutory duties of Local Authorities in relation to equipment/adaptations for people with disabilities are laid down in the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act 1970, as amended by Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act (Scotland) 1972. These principal duties are to make "provision of assistance in arranging for the carrying out of any works of adaptation in his home or the provision of any additional facilities designed to secure his greater safety, comfort or convenience".
- 1.3 Occupational Therapists will continue to provide welfare rights advice and information in accordance with Council policy.

#### **2 General Considerations**

General information and advice on disability issues and equipment is available through the Ability Centre (Disabled Living Centre). The centre can also provide advice on sources of funding where appropriate.

- 2.1 In order to qualify for provision of equipment/adaptation in the home the following conditions must pertain:
  - 2.1.1 The person for whom the service is requested must be "a disabled person" as set out in the terms of the legislation. These disabilities include physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health problems and sensory impairments.
  - 2.1.2 The person must be resident in the area of the local authority.
  - 2.1.3 The house he/she lives in must be the only or main residence of that person.
  - 2.1.4 If more than one disabled person is resident for the household then provision will address the needs of all parties wherever possible. The provision of equipment/adaptation must be essential or of major importance to that person or the carer(s) because of the nature of the disability.
  - 2.1.5 Social Work Department funding or recommendations of adaptation will not normally be repeated (for a period of five years) where the client of their own volition moves to less suitable housing.
  - 2.1.6 The purpose of the provision of equipment/adaptation is to increase or maintain functional independence of the person who has permanent and substantial disabilities and to improve the quality of care given by the carer and to reduce the physical demands on them.
  - 2.1.7 The level of provision will depend on the severity of functional impairment caused to the person by his disabilities, an assessment of the carer's needs where appropriate and on the technical feasibility of adapting the property in which he lives.

- 2.1.8 The general principle of minimum intervention will apply in determining what provision is to be approved.
- 2.1.9 If the property cannot ultimately be adapted to provide an accessible environment suitable for a disabled person then recommendations for adaptation will not be provided.
- 2.1.10 Adaptations should be planned to meet the client/carers current needs and take account of prognosis where this is known.
- 2.1.11 Proposed equipment/adaptation must be discussed and agreed with the client, carers and any other appropriate agencies before the provision is made.
- 2.1.12 Prognosis should not be a barrier to the provision of adaptations if these works can be completed timeously for the client.
- 2.1.13 The client should be made aware that providing major adaptations is a lengthy process. Information regarding the financial implications for him, will be given. Detailed information is available from the Private Sector Grants limit at the time of application.
- 2.1.14 Where equipment is required to manage or treat a health condition, the provision remains the responsibility of the NHS. Social Work Department staff will assist the public in directing their requests.
- 2.1.15 The Social Work Department will not generally carry out or recommend temporary adaptations when alternative housing is being pursued or where permanent adaptation has been refused.
- 2.1.16 In some circumstances alternative housing may be a more viable solution.
- 2.1.17 Ethnic minority and cultural needs of the client and household will be considered in reaching decisions about suitable adaptations.

### **3 Bathroom Adaptations**

- 3.1.1 The Social Work Department will assess bathing difficulties when requested and advise on the most appropriate and safe solution in the individual circumstances.
- 3.1.2 The Social Work Department will provide basic bathing equipment for people who have substantial functional impairment, but could bathe independently with such provision or whose carer requires to help with bathing.
- 3.1.3 A bathlift will be considered when a person is unable to bathe independently with basic equipment, but would be safe and independent either on their own, or with the assistance of a carer.
- 3.1.4 Over bath shower is the preferred option where basic bathing equipment is not suitable. Bathlifts may be used but decisions will take account of length of time it is anticipated the assistance will be required and the needs of other members of the household
- 3.1.5 Bathlifts will not be considered when the client insists on bathing where there is an overbath shower in situ. Exceptions will be made for people with breathing difficulties who are unable to tolerate the shower spray (people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, Emphysema, Asthma etc)

### **3.2 Factors to consider regarding Bathlift**

- 3.2.1 The lifespan of a bathlift and the long term replacement costs to be considered, as well as ongoing maintenance.

- 3.2.2 The number of other residents in the household and their abilities to be taken into account i.e. are there children in the household who require baths?

A bathlift would be supplied for a client with a terminal illness if they have expressed a desire to bathe, and they would be safe in its use, either independently or with the assistance of carers.

### **3.3 Overbath Showers**

The provision of an overbath shower will be recommended by the Social Work Department in any of the following circumstances:

- 3.3.1 It is not technically feasible to fit equipment because of limited space within the bath/bathroom and/or
- 3.3.2 The client cannot use available appropriate equipment because of functional impairment, but can transfer onto showering equipment with assistance from carer.
- 3.3.3 The client could be independent with self care with an overbath shower, used in conjunction with appropriate equipment (i.e. swivel bather, shower board rails). This will improve the quality of life for the client, and reduce the burden of care for the carer.
- 3.3.4 The client is incontinent of urine and/or faeces.
- 3.3.5 Household contains other residents who may require use of bath.
- 3.3.6 Overbath shower will be provided where the client is epileptic and assisted bathing is required.

### **3.4 Level Access Showers**

The Social Work Department will consider removal of bath and installation of a level access shower in the following circumstances:

- 3.4.1 The client cannot use an overbath shower, even with help and/or equipment.
- 3.4.2 The client is wheelchair-dependent and could access and use the shower facility independently.
- 3.4.3 The provision of a level access shower would allow the carer to shower the client without having to lift/move him/her manually.
- 3.4.4 There are no alternative means of meeting bathing needs.
- 3.4.5 Level access showers will only be installed on ground floor level, where access to the property is level or rampable. (see 2.1.9)
- 3.4.6 Level access showers in upstairs bathrooms will only be considered where the property is level or rampable **and** there is a stairlift in situ. (see 2.1.9)
- 3.4.7 Level access showers will be considered in flatted property which is accessible via lift. (see 2.1.9)
- 3.4.8 Requests for terminally ill clients will be dealt with on an individual basis e.g. case report depicting safety, use of appropriate counselling, timeframe, quality of life.
- 3.4.9 The Social Work Department will not provide treatment baths e.g. spa baths, hydrotherapy baths, or replace a shower with a bath.

## **4 Toilet Adaptations**

- 4.1.1 The Social Work Department will supply equipment to enable a client to use the toilet more easily, safely and independently.
- 4.1.2 The Social Work Department will supply chemical toilets on a temporary basis for clients whose disability prevents him accessing the existing toilet and who has no means of emptying a commode (available from the Health Board).
- 4.1.3 The Social Work Department will recommend the provision of a special toilet with electrically operated washing and drying facilities for a client who cannot otherwise attend to personal hygiene.
- 4.1.4 The Social Work Department will recommend the provision of a downstairs toilet only if this will provide all the necessary facilities e.g. bedroom, living room, kitchen, washing facilities and external access on one level.

## **5 Chair and Chair Accessories**

- 5.1.1 Basic chair raising units and/or foam cushions designed to enable the client to transfer on/off independently and safely will be provided where this is technically possible. A standard proforma for chair details (height, width, etc) will also be supplied to enable client to purchase a suitable chair at a future date.
- 5.1.2 Chair raising units will be supplied to enable mobile hoist access.
- 5.1.3 Settees will only be raised where there is no suitable chair, and this is technically possible.
- 5.1.4 Where a chair is not technically suitable for raising, advice will be given regarding the specific requirements for purchasing a new chair (standard proforma for chair prescription and Ability Centre details).

### **5.2 Orthopaedic Chairs**

- 5.2.1 The Social Work Department will supply an orthopaedic chair on a short-term loan for six weeks following a hip replacement, when the client's existing chair is unsuitable for raising.

### **5.3 Hemco Chairs**

- 5.3.1 The Social Work Department will consider supplying a Hemco chair where the client's own chair cannot be adapted to allow safe and independent transfers, and the client would not be able to transfer from an orthopaedic chair.
- 5.3.2 The Social Work Department will not supply a Hemco chair for sleeping in instead of a bed.
- 5.3.3 When a Hemco chair is required to reduce oedema or to manage similar health conditions, this will be dealt with by the NHS.

### **5.4 Specialist Seating**

#### **Children**

- 5.4.1 The Social Work Department will supply suitable seating for a child who has specific support needs, though not purely for postural support to encourage activity (e.g. playing, feeding, etc).

- 5.4.2 The Social Work Department will supply specialist multi-adjustable support seating following a referral from the Health Authority Paediatric Occupational Therapist.

## **5.5 Adult Specialist Seating**

- 5.5.1 The Social Work Department to consider the provision of a multi-adjustable seating system as an alternative seating provision from being confined in a wheelchair throughout the client's waking period.

- 5.5.2 A decision regarding the provision of seating will take into account the following factors:

The moving and handling considerations in relation to the additional number of transfers required, type of hoists and compatibility, and the space requirement for these multi-adjustable seating systems.

## **6 Hoists**

- 6.1 The Social Work Department supplies Docherty bed hoists and ceiling/portable tracking hoists for clients to facilitate safe transfers in the following situations:

- 6.1.1 The client is unsafe transferring with a mobile hoist, and/or a mobile hoist would put the client's carer at risk, due to space restrictions.

The provision of mobile hoists is via the nursing equipment loans service.

- 6.1.2 The Social Work Department will supply a Docherty bed hoist where there is insufficient activity space to manoeuvre a mobile hoist.

- 6.1.3 The Social Work Department will supply or recommend the provision of a ceiling track hoist when the property is fully wheelchair accessible (see 2.1.9)

- 6.1.4 The Social Work Department will consider the provision of a portable track hoist when the client is awaiting re-housing to more suitable accommodation, or when a client is in a terminal case of illness and their care is taking place outwith the usually designated room e.g. a dining room is being used as a temporary downstairs bedroom.

## **6.2 Hoists - Additional Information**

- 6.2.1 When a client is assessed as only requiring a ceiling track hoist, this is supplied via the Social Work Department in owner/occupier or city council properties. When clients live in a housing association property, a recommendation will be sent to supply and fit a tracking hoist. The provision is a shared responsibility, part funded by the Social Work Department and part by Housing Association.

- 6.2.2 Ceiling track hoists are checked four times annually for insurance/maintenance purposes.

## **7 Stair-lifts**

- 7.1 Ultimately, it is a matter of professional judgement whether or not to recommend the provision of a stair lift. The provision of a stair-lift is a short-term solution, and alternative solutions should be considered in the longer term.

- 7.2 The following factors are to be considered when assessing a client for the provision of a stair-lift:

The provision of an internal stair-lift will be considered if the individual has a substantial disability, and:

- 7.2.1 They are unable to negotiate stairs without unreasonable risk to their health and physical wellbeing.
- 7.2.2 They require to access facilities on both levels of their accommodation.
- 7.2.3 The external access to the property is rampable.
- 7.2.4 The economic lifespan of a stair-lift (approximately five years) and long-term replacement costs will be considered, as well as ongoing maintenance and repair costs.
- 7.3 The following additional factors will also be considered in the assessment:
  - 7.3.1 Whether or not wheelchair adapted or single level accommodation is a more suitable option.
  - 7.3.2 What will be the impact on other members of the family e.g. creating a trapping hazard for young children, the narrowing of the stairs for other users.
  - 7.3.3 Clients require to have good posture and sitting balance, and be able to transfer safely and independently without the assistance of another person or equipment.
  - 7.3.4 Requests for terminally ill clients will be dealt with on an individual basis taking account of safety, timeframe and quality of life factors.
- 7.4 External Stairlifts**

The Social Work Department do not recommend or provide external stair-lifts.

## **8 Access and external adaptations**

### **8.1 Ramps**

- 8.1.1 The Social Work Department will provide or recommend the provision of a ramp for clients who use a self-propelling or electric wheelchair both indoors and out, that this chair has been prescribed by the NHS and the property can be ramped in accordance with building regulations
- 8.1.2 The provision of a ramp will only be considered when all necessary facilities will be accessible i.e. bedroom, living room, kitchen, toilet and washing facilities.
- 8.1.3 The Social Work Department will assess for the provision of a set of portable ramps if there is no alternative or these ramps were for occasional use only (e.g. for social/recreational outings). The temporary ramps are only to be used at the property, which has been assessed and are deemed suitable for safe use.
- 8.1.4 The Social Work Department will not provide funding but will provide a package of information in relation to ramping and storage where a client has obtained a non-prescribed wheelchair or scooter. This advice/information package can be obtained from the Ability Centre.
- 8.1.5 The Social Work Department will assess for the provision of handrails at access steps instead of a ramp if the client can walk down steps with assistance, and the carer can take the empty chair down the steps

### **8.2 Handrails/steps**

- 8.2.1 The Social Work Department will assess and provide/make recommendations to the appropriate housing agency for provision of grab rails, handrails or banisters to facilitate client safety.



8.2.2 The Social Work Department will assess and provide/make recommendation to the appropriate housing agency for the alteration of a maximum of two steps at the entrance to the property. The alteration will include widening of the narrow top step to standard width and platforming of the second step if appropriate in order to facilitate client safety.

### **8.2.3 Paths**

The Social Work Department will recommend the widening of a path to facilitate use of walking aids or wheelchair if existing path is too narrow to afford safe and easy access. If the path is in poor repair, it is the responsibility of the landlord to make good.

### **8.2.4 Fences**

The Social Work Department will recommend fencing to create a safe play area where,

- i) A child who is diagnosed by a consultant paediatrician as hyperactive and is over the age of three years.
- ii) For a young child whose parent has a sensory impairment e.g. poor vision/blind, or who is physically disabled to the extent of being unable to reach the child quickly.

### **8.2.5 Hard Standings/Dropped Kerbs**

The Social Work Department will assess and provide/recommend the provision of a dropped kerb/run-in when the client is a full-time self-propelling or electric wheelchair user and the car driver.

## **9 Door Entry Systems**

9.1 The Social Work Department will provide a door entry system for a client whose mobility is significantly impaired i.e. uses a zimmer or tri-wheeled walker, and access to the door is either impossible or puts clients at severe risk of falling.

9.1.1 The Social Work Department will also consider provision of a door entry system where there is an internal flight of stairs from the front door to the client's flat, and the client is at risk of falling on the stairs.

9.1.2 It must be noted that door entry system may affect domestic insurance and are not compatible with most PVC door systems. Therefore, they cannot be provided in all situations. When a door entry system is in situ, further provision of a key safe will not be considered.

### **9.2 Automatic Door Openers**

9.2.1 The Social Work Department will recommend the provision of an automatic door opening system on the main entrance to the property for clients who are full-time wheelchair users.

9.2.2 The Social Work Department will consider recommending the provision of an automatic door opening system on the main entrance to the property for clients who have some mobility problems i.e. use zimmer, tri-wheeled walker, and would otherwise be housebound.

### **9.3 Key Safes**

Key safes are generally installed to allow care workers access to a client's home.

## **10 Sensory Issues**

### **10.1 Hearing Impairment**

- 10.1.1 Referred clients who are hearing impaired should have a prescribed hearing aid as appropriate, and be experiencing difficulty. Clients who have not had a recent hearing assessment will be asked to consult their GP for referral to the Audiology Clinics.
- 10.1.2 The Social Work Department will provide specialised equipment for hearing impaired clients.
- 10.1.3 The Social Work Department will supply a Flashing Light Doorbell to enable profoundly deaf clients to be alerted to callers at their door when a loud or wire-free doorbell would not be suitable. The provision of loud and wire-free doorbells would not be considered as a specialised piece of equipment, and would therefore be a matter of private purchase.
- 10.1.4 The assessment process will take place in a clinic setting, to allow various specialised pieces of equipment to be demonstrated appropriately.
- 10.1.5 Due to the increased use of mobile phones and email, clients who wish to have a textphone will be advised to contact BT, who provide a full assessment package.

### **10.2 Visual Impairment**

- 10.2.1 The provision of equipment for clients with a visual impairment is via the Dundee Society for the Blind and Partially Sighted.

## **11 Household Adaptations**

- 11.1 The Social Work Department will give advice on appropriate equipment and where it can be purchased, either locally or through mail order.
- 11.1.2 The Social Work Department will recommend to the appropriate housing authority any permanent alterations as prescribed in the COSLA 40/85 and HAG agreements. The housing authority is the funding agent and will decide whether the work is undertaken to meet the needs of the person with physical disabilities.
- 11.1.3 The Social Work Department will provide removable/temporary equipment/adaptations e.g. small grab rails, internal rails and equipment for people with sensory impairment.
- 11.1.4 The Social Work Department will assess/recommend for an adaptation of a kitchen taking into account the needs of the whole household.
- 11.1.5 The Social Work Department will assess/recommend for re-hanging doors, converting to sliding or bi-folding, replacing door handles and fitting kick plates.
- 11.1.6 The Social Work Department will consider providing an internal stair-gate for the safety of a child over the age of 3 years, with no sense of danger.
- 11.1.7 The Social Work Department does not provide/recommend alternative sources of heating, replacement of windows or insulation of houses, as these are not specific to the needs of clients with physical disabilities.

## **12 Small Aids**

- 12.1 The Social Work Department will provide advice to clients via the Ability Centre to self-select and purchase small aids.
- 12.2 The Social Work Department will supply a limited range of small aids when they are involved in supplying a range of larger equipment and/or adaptations.