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Title: Occupational Therapy Service Policy

Aim / Summary: To ensure that occupational therapy services are provided consistently across Nottinghamshire.

Document type (please choose one)

Policy	x	Guidance	
Strategy		Procedure	

Approved by:

Version number: 3

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Subject Areas

(choose all relevant)

About the Council		Older people	x
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Please include any supporting documents

- [1. Occupational Therapy – Provision of Equipment and Major Adaptations – practice guidance](#)
- [2. Occupational Therapy – Recommending Major Adaptations – Practice guidance](#)
- [3. Double to single handling practice guidance](#)
- [4. DFG contribution- NCC contribution fund practice guidance](#)

5. [Personal Budgets and Personal Health Budgets for Community Equipment ICELs](#)
6. [Provision of equipment to care homes ICELs policy.](#)
7. [Transition planning for young people with disabilities](#)

Review date	Amendments
1.4.2015	Legislation updated in line with the Care Act 2014
23.10.17	Reviewed and amended by Principal OT

Occupational Therapy Service Policy

Context

Occupational Therapy enables people to experience health, wellbeing and life satisfaction through participation in activities or occupation. When people cannot participate in their daily activities through mental or physical illness, disability or old age their wellbeing, identity and sense of purpose is affected and they can become dependent on others.

Giving people the access to the right help at the right time is Nottinghamshire County Council's (NCC) vision for social care, and helping people to help themselves is a key stage in the Adult Social Care Strategy.

NCC employ Occupational Therapists and Community Care Officers (OT) to assess people's needs and to support people to identify any outcomes that will improve their wellbeing. The aim of providing this service to people living in the community, is to enable them to have the self-determination to maintain or improve their independence in their daily activities and occupations, it may also be possible to prevent or reduce dependency on social care for some people.

Occupational Therapists (OT) bring a unique contribution to social care. They are person centred in their approach, they are able to analyse how a person performs a task and identify different solutions or set goals to enable that person to be more independent. This might include changes to the environment, working with people or their carers to practice or re-learn new skills, or compensating for the things they can't do with equipment or assistive technology. Sometimes, a person will require assistance from another person to enable them to complete a task and they may be eligible under the Care Act for social care funding for this.

Occupational Therapists who work in social care are governed by specific legislation, primarily:

- [The Care Act 2014](#)
- [The Disability Discrimination Act 1995](#)
- [Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996](#)
- [Health and safety at work act 1974: Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 \(MHOR\)](#)

The Care Act 2014 imposes a duty on Local Authorities to assess adults who appear to have needs for care and support, either in their own right or because they are caring for another adult; it includes young people in transition from children's services to Adult Care. The Care Act reinforces that a Local Authority must contribute towards preventing or delaying the need for care and support services; occupational therapy has a significant role to play in this.

The Care Act **national eligibility framework** relates to the allocation of social care support, including provision of equipment and minor adaptations. The Care Act statutory guidance (2014), paragraph 8:11 clearly states that people should not be charged for community equipment and minor adaptations (under £1000) regardless of whether they are provided to meet eligible need or to prevent or delay needs (Gov.uk; 2016).

The County Council has established an Integrated Community Equipment Loan Service (ICELS) with Nottingham City Council and the local health commissioners for the provision of equipment and minor adaptations; this is overseen by a senior leaders team comprised from health and social care, referred to as The Partnership Board.

[Occupational Therapy Loan of Equipment and Provision of Minor Adaptations guidance](#)

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 provides the current legislative framework for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). Since 1990, District Councils have been under a statutory duty to provide grant aid to disabled people for a range of adaptations to their homes. The maximum amount of grant available for a mandatory DFG is currently £30,000. *This act does not sit within the Care Act legislative framework, meaning that a person can be eligible for major adaptation funding and yet not be eligible for funded social care. This recognises that major adaptations can increase independence and can prevent dependency on statutory services. The Housing Act 1996 provides definitions of who may qualify for a DFG, irrespective of the type of tenure. It also sets out the purposes for which mandatory DFGs may be given.*

A financial test of resources is applied to the disabled occupant, their spouse or partner and may lead to a deduction from the amount of grant payable. A District Council does not have a duty to assist applicants with their assessed share of the costs. However, they may refer cases of hardship to the social services authority or consider using their discretionary powers of assistance.

Section 24 of the Housing Act 1996 places a duty on District Councils to consult the Social Services authority on the adaptation needs of disabled people, i.e. whether works are necessary and appropriate. The District Council must decide what action to take on the basis of the advice given by the Local Authority and judge whether it is reasonable, practicable and cost effective to carry out the works. *Often District Councils will wish a person to consider rehousing to a more appropriate accommodation; one that is adapted already or more suitable for adaptations. OT and CCO (OT) should advise this on their assessments or when giving initial information and advice, they may also need to signpost to other housing options.*

[Occupational Therapy - Recommending Major Adaptations guidance](#)

Under the **Care Standards Act 2000**, the County Council expects the registered manager in a care home to undertake an assessment of the person prior to offering a placement, which includes the need for standard equipment to meet their needs.

[ICELS s provision of equipment to care homes policy document](#)

The Health and safety at work act 1974 (Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992) Regulation 4(1) sets out a hierarchy of measures for employers that are designed to reduce the risks of manual handling. The County Council employs Occupational Therapists and CCO (OT) to undertake these risk assessments. They should apply the 3 principles outlined in the MHOR (1992) to their assessments: avoid hazardous manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable; risk assess any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided and reduce the risk of injury so far as is reasonably practicable.

The County Council supports the single handling care approach and will only fund personal budgets based on assessed moving and handling needs. *OTs and CCO (OT)*

should engage in a positive risk management approach and any risk assessments moving and handling plans or risk management documents should be reviewed to reflect a person's changing needs.

Double to Single Handed Care Guidance

Scope of this occupational therapy policy

This policy applies to:

- People who are assessed by the Adult Access Service and OT intake team.
- People who are referred for Re-ablement or Enablement and need equipment or minor adaptations in order to remain in their own homes safely.
- People who are assessed as eligible for social care support. *This will include those people whose situation presents a risk of deterioration or where problems are escalating, and where early intervention could prevent or delay the need for social care support.*
- People who are caring for a disabled friend or relative and need assistance to meet the eligible needs of the person that they care for.
- *Young people who are in transition from Children Services to Adult Care*
- *People who are in Nottinghamshire prisons or who are in approved secure premises, who are eligible for social care services.*

Principles and Commitments within this occupational therapy policy

In relation to **assessment and eligibility** the County Council OT will:

- Offer a written copy of the assessment to the service user.
- Undertake strength based conversations with people in the way best suited to their presenting needs. This may involve a phone based, online or face to face assessment, which is responsive to that persons communication needs.
- Enable people to identify sources of support to help them retain control over their lives and achieve the outcomes they want. This will include directing them to places where they can purchase their own equipment or obtain impartial advice, such as the [Nottinghamshire help yourself website](#)
- Apply the [Care Act eligibility](#) to the provision of equipment and minor adaptations, except where people have been referred for Re-ablement or Enablement *or where equipment solutions can clearly be evidenced to prevent a need for funded social care.*
- *Ensure that young people in transition to adult services follow the Transition Pathway. When they are 17 years old, the children's and adult's worker will engage in person centred conversations about how the young person's needs can be met going into adulthood, under the [Care Act legislation](#). They will be referred by children's services 28 days before their 18th birthday for any ongoing recommendations or unmet eligible needs, to be assessed by Adult Care [Transition planning for young people with disabilities](#). When possible and necessary, the children's and adult care OT will complete joint visits to ensure a seamless handover for the young person. The children's OT will continue to communicate*

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with Adult care OT for 28 days post 18th birthday, to enable continuity and information sharing.

- Ensure that people in Nottinghamshire prisons who are eligible for social care services are offered an Occupational Therapy assessment. This is important for people in the criminal justice system who have care and support needs, as it can support their rehabilitation and may positively impact on the likelihood of re-offending and their ability to rebuild their lives on release.
- OTs commit to undertake decision specific Mental Capacity Assessments around matters that relate to their area of expertise, such as: individuals having an understanding of the consequences of their actions in relation to how they perform an activity, use equipment or moving and handling technique or carers ability to understand the use of equipment or moving and handling technique.
- OTs commit to investigate safeguarding concerns that are relevant to their area of expertise for people living in the community.

In relation to the provision of [equipment and minor adaptations](#) the County Council OT will:

- Provide equipment and minor adaptations free to people referred for Re-ablement or Enablement, where this will prevent or delay the need for social care or enable them to remain in their homes for longer.
- NCC will provide a direct payment for equipment on request following an OT or CCO (OT) assessment of need, if certain criteria is met.

[Personal Budgets and Personal Health Budgets for Community Equipment ICELS](#)

- Provide equipment and minor adaptations only for a service user's main residence, except in exceptional circumstances, such as where there is a clearly identified risk to a person or their carer by non-provision.
- Not provide standard contract equipment or minor adaptations for permanent residents in care homes, if the resident needs a non-standard piece of equipment as defined by ICELS the OT or CCO (OT) will loan the equipment and provide instructions on how to use it safely. In the case of emergency respite placements, equipment can be loaned and returned to British Red Cross.

[Equipment for Care Homes](#)

- Not service, maintain, remove or repair equipment that belongs to a service user, except in the case of ceiling track hoists funded through a Disabled Facilities Grant or via the single handling project.
- Not provide general moving and handling training for care home staff, personal assistants employed using a personal budget either privately or through an agency.

In relation to the provision of [major adaptations](#) the County Council OT will:

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- Provide a statement of needs to District and Borough councils that recommends a Disabled Facilities Grant funding application for a major adaptation or make recommendations for adaptations if the property is the councils' own housing stock.
- Where people are living in properties that are unsuitable for their long term needs, or unfeasible to adapt, the OT will suggest rehousing in the first instance.
- They will recommend that people adapt an existing downstairs room if available and suitable, before making a recommendation for a major adaptation.
- Only recommend major adaptations to a person's main residence in line with sections [21 \(2\) \(b\)](#) and [22 \(b\)](#) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
- Consider financial assistance for people who cannot afford their assessed contribution towards a Disabled Facilities Grant. The contribution will only be given in cases of extreme hardship and it will be in the form of a loan that is subject to an assessment by the County Council's Adult Care Financial Services. It will result in a legal charge being placed on the property if and when it is sold; this legal charge may incur an admin fee at each mortgage application.

[Disabled Facilities Grant- NCC contribution fund](#)

Key actions to meet the commitments set out in the policy:

- Staff guidance will be maintained to ensure that this policy is consistently applied across the County.
- The assessment pathway and associated documentation will be reviewed in consultation with the County Council's occupational therapists.
- Ways of working will be explored with the County Council's occupational therapists to ensure that the Council's processes are as efficient as possible.
- The Integrated Community Equipment Loan Service will be reviewed to ensure that it works efficiently.
- Work will be undertaken with District and Borough councils and local housing associations to ensure that requests for adaptations, and other associated work, are dealt with as efficiently as possible and in line with the existing policy.

Reference:

[Gov.UK \(2016\) Care Act Factsheet](#)

Completed by Principal OT Cate Bennett.
