



Nottinghamshire County Council

Policy Library Pro Forma

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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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Procedure	<input type="checkbox"/>

Approved by:

Version number:

Date approved:

Proposed review date:

Subject Areas (choose all relevant)

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Author:

Responsible team:

Contact number:

Contact email:

Please include any supporting documents

1. Occupational Therapy – Provision of Equipment and Major Adaptations – staff guidance

2. Occupational Therapy – Recommending Major Adaptations – staff guidance

3.

Review date

Amendments



Occupational Therapy Service Policy

Context

The aim of providing adaptations and equipment to disabled people living at home is to maintain and improve their independence, and to reduce health and social care costs. This work is governed by legislation, primarily the:

- National Assistance Act 1948
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- National Health Service & Community Care Act 1990
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- Prioritising need in the context of Putting People First: A whole system approach to eligibility for social care – Guidance on Eligibility Criteria for Adult Social Care, England 2010.

Section 47 of the National Health Service & Community Care Act 1990 imposes a duty on local authorities to carry out an assessment of need for community care support and then, having regard to that assessment, to decide whether those needs call for the provision of support by the local authority.

The **national eligibility guidance** is statutory guidance and is issued under section 7(1) of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. It relates the allocation of funding for social care support, including funding for equipment and minor adaptations.

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 provides the current legislative framework for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). Since 1990, local housing authorities 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.

A 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 local housing authority 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.

The Act 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.

Section 24 of the Act places a duty on housing authorities to consult the social services authority on the adaptation needs of disabled people, i.e. whether works are necessary and appropriate. The housing authority must decide what action to take on

the basis of the advice given by the local authority and judge whether it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the works.

Under the **Care Standards Act 2000**, the County Council expects the registered person in a care home to undertake an assessment prior to a placement, which includes the need for specialist equipment,

The County Council employs occupational therapists and community care officers with relevant training and/or experience to assess and make recommendations for equipment and adaptations in order to implement its statutory requirements.

It has established an Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES) with Nottingham City Council and the local health commissioners for the provision of equipment and minor adaptations.

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to people:

- who are referred to the County Council's re-ablement service (START) and need equipment or minor adaptations in order to remain in their own homes safely.
- 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.
- who are caring for a disabled friend or relative and need assistance to meet the eligible needs of the person that they care for.

Principles and Commitments

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

- undertake assessments with people in the way best suited to their presenting needs. This may involve a phone based or face to face assessment.
- offer a copy of the assessment to the service user.
- apply the national eligibility guidance to the provision of equipment and minor adaptations in line with the County Council's eligibility threshold, except where people have been referred to the re-ablement service (START).
- identify sources of support for individuals who are assessed as having low or moderate risks to their independence, 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.

In relation to the provision of **equipment and minor adaptations** the Council will:

- provide equipment and minor adaptations free to people referred to the START service, where this will enable them to remain in their homes for longer.
- provide a direct payment, where requested, so that eligible people can buy their own equipment. If the service user wants an item that is over the price that the County Council is prepared to pay, the Council will offer the 'cost price' to the service user and they can use their own money to buy their preferred item.

- not provide a direct payment for equipment that can be loaned from the Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES).
- ask for the return of any equipment purchased using a direct payment once it is no longer required by the service user.
- provide equipment and minor adaptations only for a service user's main residence, except in exceptional circumstances.
- not provide equipment or minor adaptations for residents in care homes unless the resident needs a non-standard piece of equipment as defined by ICES. In this case County Council staff will loan the equipment and provide instructions on how to use it safely.
- help to investigate in situations where moving and handling concerns in a care home result in safeguarding issues, county council staff will help to investigate the concerns, but will not provide instruction or equipment unless the need is for a non-standard piece of equipment as set out above.
- 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.
- not provide general moving and handling training for care home staff, personal assistants employed using a personal budget either privately or through an agency. Advice and guidance on the safe use of equipment provided by the County Council will be provided.

In relation to the provision of **major adaptations** the County Council will:

- provide a statement of needs to District and Borough Councils both for people recommending a Disabled Facilities Grant for a major adaptation and for adaptations to the councils' own housing stock.
- recommend that people adapt an existing downstairs room, where 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
- maintain a Disabled Facilities Grant Contribution Fund for people who cannot afford their assessed contribution. The contribution will only be given in cases of extreme hardship. It will be in the form of a loan and will be subject to an assessment by the County Council's Adult Care Financial Services. It will result in a charge being placed on the property.

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 county council occupational therapists.
- ways of working will be explored with county council occupational therapists to ensure that the County Council's processes are as efficient as possible.
- the Integrated Community Equipment 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.

Occupational Therapy Service Policy