

Living Independently

If you, or a member of your household has a disability or are elderly, you may be able to get equipment or have your home adapted to make it easier for you to live in.

This leaflet is for people living in the North Norfolk local authority area only. Other local authorities may operate slightly different systems.

What is an adaptation?

Each year, we adapt some homes to meet the changing needs of our tenants, for example if they become disabled or frail. The changes are made so that tenants and members of their household can live more safely and independently.

The help provided can include changes to the property or providing special equipment. This work is usually known as an adaptation.

What help is available?

There is a range of help and support available, but it can be confusing to know who to speak to about what. We explain the support available over the next few pages, along with who to speak to about what. If you're confused or concerned about the process, you can talk to Victory's Customer Services Team.

Equipment page 3

When your needs are relatively straightforward but could be improved with small equipment.

Minor adaptations page 4

Small adaptations that can be carried out by Victory.

Major adaptations page 5

Larger adaptations and equipment that may involve permanent or in some cases complex alterations to your home and which may need to be completed by specialist contractors.

If adaptations are needed for a disabled child, please contact Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020.

Equipment

Common difficulties with daily living activities could be helped by using certain items designed to solve those problems. For example:

Problem	Helped by
! Getting in or out of the bath	→ Bath seat, bath board or bath step
! Getting up from a low toilet	→ Raised toilet seat or toilet frame
! Carrying things between rooms	→ Trolley, or caddy to attach to walking frame
! Reaching down to put on socks, stockings or shoes	→ Long handled shoe horn, sock aids

How do I get equipment?

Call Adult Social Care at Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020.

You can be assessed over the phone and, if approved, equipment will be sent out to you.

How long will it take?

Priority is given to those with most need, but equipment is usually provided within a few weeks.

How much does it cost?

Equipment provided after an approved assessment is free of charge.

Case study

Ron has got arthritis, and doesn't find it as easy to bend down as he used to. He struggles with getting out of the bath, and picking up items from the floor.

Ron contacted Norfolk County Council. After being assessed over the phone, he was provided with a bath seat so that it wasn't so far to get up and down, and a pick-up stick to extend his reach.

Minor Adaptations

Minor adaptations are alterations that do not require a health professional assessment, do not need a specialist contractor to complete the work, and can be carried out by Victory. For example:

- Fitting grab rails
- Altering a door to a sliding door
- Fitting lever taps
- Fitting a free-standing rail by toilet
- Fitting an extra-loud doorbell
- Fitting an additional bannister rail

How do I get help?

Contact Victory using the details on the back of this leaflet. We will talk you through the process and if you qualify we will arrange for the work to take place. We may need to visit you at home.

How long will the process take?

Work should be carried out within 28 days from approval of the adaptation.

How much does it cost?

Approved minor adaptations are paid for and carried out by Victory Housing Trust.

Major Adaptations

Major adaptations are bigger changes that cost more to complete. They may need a specialist contractor to undertake the work. For example:

- access to the property – altering steps, ramp, door widening
- access to upper floors – stair-lift, through-floor lift
- access to bathing facilities – over-bath shower, removal of bath and replacement with level access shower
- access to toilet facilities – adding an extra toilet, wash-dry toilet
- access to cooking facilities – kitchen alterations
- access to the community – dropped kerb, hard-standing, pathway

How do I get help?

Contact the North Norfolk District Council's Integrated Housing Adaptations Team (IHAT) on **01263 516060**.

They will work out whether you are eligible for the adaptations you are asking for. You will be visited at home as part of the assessment process.

How long will it take?

There is a very high demand for major adaptations and as

a result you could be waiting several months to be assessed. Requests are prioritised based on how urgent your need is which is decided based on an in-depth telephone conversation with you at the start of the process.

How much does it cost?

If adaptations are recommended you can apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) to help pay for the works. The maximum grant is £30,000. See page 6 for more information on this.

If your home is not suitable for adaptation, then moving house may be a better option. Victory Housing Trust and North Norfolk District Council can help you with this.

Major Adaptations

Disabled Facilities Grants

These are used to fund major adaptations. They are means tested, so depending on your capital or assets, including income and savings, you may need to pay for some or all of the works.

If you receive one of the benefits listed on the right you will not have to pay anything.

A Disabled Facilities Grant will not affect any benefits that you're getting.

- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Employment and Support Allowance (Income based)
- Pension Credit Guarantee
- Council Tax Support (not discount or reduction)

What happens next?

You will be visited at home to go through the application process and to plan a schedule for the recommended works. You will then need to get quotes from local contractors who are willing to do the work. Help is available for those who need it.

Victory must give permission for work to be done before a grant can be approved.

If your grant is approved, you will be guided through the next steps of the process, which may vary depending on the works needed.

You will not receive payment for any work that has been started before your grant is approved, this includes fixing bad work done by you or a contractor you have employed.

Some frequently asked questions

Q Can I make alterations and pay for them myself?

A Yes you can, provided we have given you our written permission beforehand. We will not withhold permission unreasonably. For major adaptations funded by a Disabled Facilities Grant, if you or a relative does the work, you will only be paid for the cost of the materials used and not for the labour. The Council will have to be satisfied that the work will be carried out to a satisfactory standard.

Q Can we have a sensory or therapy room?

A Adaptations that are mainly for educational or personal development are not usually recommended after an assessment.

Q Can I keep my bath?

A During your assessment it will be decided if you can keep a bath as well as adding a level access shower, this is often not possible.

Q Can we have an extension?

A The maximum grant is £30,000. If a recommendation is made for an adaptation that requires an extension to your house, and it costs less than £30,000, then it can be provided. Victory must approve this as your landlord.

Q Can I have help with other day-to-day things?

A Gardening, cleaning, shopping or personal care are not part of adaptations, but Victory may be able to provide information about getting help with these to help you be more independent. Contact the Customer Service Team to find out more.

This leaflet explains the processes for adaptations and equipment in North Norfolk. Other local authorities have slightly different systems. Please contact your local council's Integrated Housing Adaptations Team (IHAT) to find out more.

Contact us if you'd like support or advice for any element of living independently in your own home.

0330 123 1860* Charged at same rate as 01 and 02 numbers

Email: info@victoryhousing.co.uk

Visit: www.victoryhousing.co.uk

 **Twitter:** @VictoryHousing

 **Facebook:** facebook.com/victoryhousing

Write to: Victory Housing Trust, Tom Moore House, Cromer Road, North Walsham NR28 0NB

Visit us at: Tom Moore House, Monday to Friday between 8:30am and 5pm

* We record all phone calls that we make and receive for quality and training purposes.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, audio, Braille, another language or an alternative format, please contact us and we'll do our best to help.

