

**Adults & Community  
Directorate**

**HOUSING ADAPTATIONS**

**Procedures and Practice Guidance for the  
Provision of Major Adaptations to the  
Homes of Disabled People**

February 2010

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## INFORMATION SHEET

<b>Service area</b>	Older People's and Independent Living Services
<b>Date effective from</b>	March 2010
<b>Responsible officer(s)</b>	Divisional Manager Independent Living Services
<b>Date of review(s)</b>	March 2012
<b>Status:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mandatory (all named staff must adhere to guidance)</b></li> <li>• <b>Optional (procedures and practice can vary between teams)</b></li> </ul>	Mandatory
<b>Target audience</b>	Occupational Therapists, Community Care Workers and technical staff within Halton Home Improvement and Independent Living Services
<b>Date of committee/SMT decision</b>	
<b>Related document(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Adaptations Policy</li> <li>• Procedures and Practice Guidance for the Provision of Minor Adaptations to the Homes of Disabled People</li> </ul>
<b>Superseded document(s)</b>	None
<b>Equality Impact Assessment completed</b>	Community Impact Assessment completed
<b>File reference</b>	

	<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>Practice</b>
1.	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>The purpose of this document is to ensure a fair and a consistent response is given when considering the provision of major adaptations to a person’s home following an assessment of their needs.</p> <p>It provides guidance to Local Authority Occupational Therapists and Community Care Workers within the Borough, who are proposing major adaptations to the homes of disabled people to enable them to live at home independently or with support.</p> <p>This document is intended to assist trained and professional staff in determining whether proposed adaptations are ‘necessary and appropriate’ for disabled people with permanent and substantial disabilities.</p> <p>Halton Borough Council acknowledges the contributions of service users and staff within the Borough and the work of the following organisations, which has assisted in the writing of this procedures and practice guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London Boroughs Occupational Managers Group “Guidelines for Major Adaptations to the Homes of People with Disabilities”;</li> <li>• Salford City Council “Community Equipment and Adaptations Statement of Purpose and Guidelines”;</li> <li>• Warrington Borough Council “Criteria for the Provision of Equipment and Minor Adaptations” and “Criteria for Major Adaptations to the Homes of Disabled People.”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Related Documents</b></p> <p>This procedure and practice guidance policy should be read in conjunction with the <b>Housing Adaptations Policy</b> which outlines the policy framework for adaptations, including an explanation of the complex legislation involved.</p> <p>There is an equivalent document for minor adaptations:</p> <p><b>Procedures and Practice Guidance for the Provision of Minor Adaptations to the Homes of Disabled People.</b></p>
2.	<p><b>Definition of Major Adaptation</b></p> <p>Major Adaptations are substantial adaptations ranging from level access showers to ground floor extensions, costing more than £1000. The guidance section of this document provides detailed information on different types of major adaptations. However it should be noted that the minor adaptation process could cover some of the items included in this document if the total cost of the items is below £1000.</p> <p>A Disabled Facilities Grant may fund major adaptations or minor works totalling more than £1000, following a full assessment of need which will also involve a financial assessment. The financial assessment may result in the person with the disability making a full or part contribution towards the cost of the adaptation.</p>	<p><b>Funding</b></p> <p>Further information about funding for major adaptations in different housing types is provided in Appendix 1</p>

	<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b><i>Practice</i></b>
3.	<p><b>The Assessment Process</b></p> <p>Initially a disabled person's and any carer's needs will be assessed by Occupational Therapists or Community Care Workers from Halton Home Improvement and Independent Living Services (HHILS).</p> <p>During the assessment process staff will gather information about the person's condition, the problems and difficulties they have in carrying out daily tasks using a balanced risk taking approach, and explore whether all appropriate treatments, including rehabilitation, have been received.</p> <p>Medical opinion and advice will be requested to clarify the nature and extent of the person's diagnosis and prognosis and identify any potential contra-indications or risk created by proposed solutions.</p> <p>In considering solutions to improving a person's independence, alternative methods, of meeting people's needs to the provision of major adaptations will always be considered first. This involves looking at whether a different way of approaching tasks or the use of equipment and /or provision of minor adaptations may meet their needs and reduce risks to a level acceptable to the disabled person using the stepped approach outlined in the Housing Adaptations Policy (Paragraph 9) and below.</p> <p><u>Stepped Approach</u></p> <p>When considering the need for adaptations the following stepped approach will be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether a different way of approaching tasks, rearranging the layout of the property and/or provision of equipment and /or minor adaptations may meet needs, reduce risks and alleviate the need for more major adaptation work.</li> <li>• Where it is established that major adaptations are required, adapt within the existing footprint of the property</li> <li>• Where extensive major adaptations are required, assist the disabled person to move to more suitable accommodation through the use of relocation grants (for owner occupiers and private tenants) and the</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>General Principles</u></b> General Principles of the Assessment Process are outlined in the Housing Adaptations Policy (1.10)</p> <p><b><u>Eligibility for Adaptations</u></b> In order to qualify for adaptations in the home: the person for whom the adaptations are being considered must have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a substantial impairment of sight , hearing or speech</li> <li>- a mental disorder or impairment of any kind or</li> <li>- a substantial physical disability due to illness, injury, impairment since birth or otherwise</li> </ul> <p>The adaptation must be at that person's only or main residence and they must be ordinarily resident within the Borough of Halton.</p>

	<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>Practice</b>
	<p>Accessible Homes Register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a ground floor extension is the only solution, the option of modular buildings will be explored, particularly with certain types of construction.</li> </ul>	
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Timescales</b></p> <p>Major adaptations are processed in date order. An ongoing review will address time targets for the completion of different types of major adaptations.</p>	<p><b>Time targets</b> – current time targets for major adaptations are provided in Appendix 2</p>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Involving disabled people and their carers</b></p> <p>It is crucial to involve the disabled person in the assessment of their own needs. The views of parents and carers are also important, particularly if they live in the same household. Any assessment should take account of the views of disabled children and young people and their parents.</p> <p>Within the provisions of The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 and Carers and the Disabled and Children Act 2000 and the Carers ( Equal Opportunity ) Act 2004 consideration of the needs of the carer will be of equal importance in that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision will improve the quality of care given to the disabled person and</li> <li>• It will help alleviate the physical demands experienced by the carer and</li> <li>• It will enable the carer to continue to provide care.</li> </ul> <p>The amount of care and support provided by relatives and carers, and the type and size of equipment used, will be taken account of when determining the space requirements of any proposed adaptations.</p> <p>A consensus on the final proposals for adaptations should be sought with the disabled person, their carers, and other members of the household, other agencies where appropriate and be part of an individual care package.</p> <p>At all stages the disabled person should be provided with adequate information on which to base their decisions. See also section 9.</p>	

	<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<i>Practice</i>
6.	<p><b>Current and long term needs</b></p> <p>Assessments will always take account of the person's current and long term needs, particularly if the person has a condition that is likely to deteriorate over time.</p> <p>As adaptations are permanent changes to a person's home, major adaptation work will only be considered if other help and support does not meet the disabled persons' needs. This involves applying the stepped process outlined in paragraph 3 (above). All existing facilities in the property will be utilised, taking account of the needs of the disabled person and their family.</p> <p><i>For example, where a wall has been removed to create a single room and putting it back provides reasonable sized rooms that the disabled person can use.</i></p> <p>Where people have deteriorating conditions, government guidance makes it clear that a relatively limited period in which a particular adaptation will be appropriate is not in itself sufficient reason for delaying or refusing its provision.. Age and / or prognosis alone should not be a barrier to the provision of adaptations. However due to the length of time required for building works, generally needs will be met by the supply of equipment and minor adaptations.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Ethnic and Cultural issues</b></p> <p>Any ethnic and cultural aspects of the household must be considered during assessments and / or planning works. Community or religious advisors may need consulting on individual cases, or it may be necessary to involve translation and advocacy services</p>	
8.	<p><b>Recording Actions and Agreements</b></p> <p>Staff will always carefully record their evidence, reasoning and conclusions in determining the course of action they will follow in conjunction with the disabled person and taking their views into account.</p> <p>Proposed solutions may change as more information becomes available.</p> <p><i>For example clinically a through floor lift would be acceptable but a technical survey of the property identifies it cannot be installed at that property.</i></p>	



	<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b><i>Practice</i></b>
9.	<p><b>Cost Effectiveness and Best Value</b></p> <p>Although the disabled person's preference will be taken into account, it is not the only consideration. The most cost effective solution, that also meets the disabled person's needs, should be found.</p> <p>If a more expensive option is available, the disabled person has the opportunity to pay the additional costs, provided that the adaptation is consistent with the needs of the disabled person and DFG processes.</p> <p>It is recognised that there may be a need to be flexible in more complex cases. Such cases will be considered by the Adaptations Panel (see below).</p>	<p><b><u>Cost Effectiveness and Best Value</u></b></p> <p>The approach to achieving cost effectiveness and Best Value is outlined in more detail in the Adaptations Policy.</p>
10.	<p><b>Role of Adaptations Panel</b></p> <p>Careful consideration of the individual circumstances of the disabled person and their family and carers is essential in order to ensure that the proposed adaptations are a realistic and cost effective option and follow the stepped approach outlined in the Adaptations Policy.</p> <p>The Strategic Adaptations Group - as a form of Adaptation Panel - hears anonymised details of particularly complex cases that challenge the current policy and practices used in the Borough. This process is used to develop services and for future planning.</p>	<p><b><u>Service Development and Future Planning</u></b></p> <p>The approach to service development and future planning is explained in the Adaptations Policy.</p>
11.	<p><b>Technical Support</b></p> <p>Once adaptations are proposed, occupational therapists and community care workers need support from technical staff, experienced in building construction and design, to determine whether adaptation is reasonable and practicable i.e. whether the person's home can be adapted in the manner proposed.</p> <p>Technical staff will visit the disabled person's home to consider the feasibility of the proposed adaptations within that particular environment. The feasibility study will also take into account current planning and building regulations requirements and will consider the possible options available.</p>	<p><b><u>Stepped Approach</u></b></p> <p>Refer to stepped approach explained in paragraph 3 (above)</p>

	<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<i>Practice</i>
	<p>The outcome of the feasibility study may lead the occupational therapists, community care workers and technical staff, working together, to suggest different ways of meeting the disabled person's needs, if the original proposals are not practicable due to the construction and design of the property.</p> <p>If the proposed adaptations cannot be achieved within the existing footprint of the home, some people may find that their needs may be best met by support for re-housing to more suitable adapted accommodation or to accommodation that can be adapted.</p> <p>Where ground floor extensions appear to be the proposed solution the use of modular build extensions that can be re-located at new properties are gaining popularity. Modular buildings will be considered as an alternative to providing a traditional extension, particularly in rented properties as they can move with the disabled person if they move, or be re-used if no longer required</p> <p>The amount of disruption involved, the duration of the proposed works and any temporary alternative arrangements that may be required will be discussed fully with the disabled person and their carer.</p>	
<b>12.</b>	<p><b>Information and continuing liaison</b></p> <p>The major adaptation process can be lengthy despite on-going work to simplify the processes and shorten time-scales.</p> <p>The disabled person will be provided with clear and comprehensive information to keep them informed about the outcome of their assessment and progress of the adaptation. A 'major adaptation liaison' role will be developed to keep disabled people informed of the stage reached in the process and update them on estimated timescales.</p> <p>Disabled people and their carers will be provided with a series of fact sheets (available in a variety of formats) relevant to their particular situation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the process, including the need for financial assessment (where applicable),</li> <li>• The roles of the individuals involved and</li> <li>• The nature and extent of any disruption during the work taking place.</li> </ul>	

	<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b><i>Practice</i></b>
	<p>Information is available on Halton Borough Council's website <a href="http://www.halton.gov.uk">www.halton.gov.uk</a> . A DVD will be developed to support this information.</p> <p>The disabled person will also retain a copy of the plans/drawings and specification. These are signed by the disabled person and the occupational therapist or community care worker as an agreement of the adaptation work to be undertaken.</p> <p>Government guidance supports site visits by the occupational therapist or community care worker where advice is required on key elements of the adaptations prior to those particular works being undertaken or if some unforeseen additional work is required that will affect the agreed adaptation.</p> <p>Technical staff will project manage the work on site.</p>	
<b>13.</b>	<p><b>Warranties and Maintenance</b></p> <p>Most items of equipment and building work will be covered by warranties for the first 6 months from completion. Some items may be guaranteed for a longer period.</p> <p>Disabled people and their carers will be supplied with fact sheets that outline which items are covered and for what period and those items that remain the responsibility of the home owner.</p> <p>The disabled person may be advised to contact their household insurance to check if they require extra cover e.g. insuring lifts and ramps against fire damage and personal injury liability.</p> <p>On-going maintenance of items will be the responsibility of the disabled person unless Halton Borough Council retains the ownership of the item.</p>	<p><b><u>Warranties and Maintenance</u></b></p> <p>For further information about warranties and maintenance see Appendix 3</p>

## SECTION 1            ACCESS

### Crossovers and Hard standings outside the disabled person's home

#### 1.1 Crossover and Hard standings

Description: A dropped kerb, pavement crossover and hard standing for a car that is usually in the disabled person's front garden.

#### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach, taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- The driver is a permanent wheelchair user OR
- The driver is a disabled parent and blue badge holder who has to supervise young children (pre-school) into the car in a safe manner OR
- The passenger is a permanent wheelchair user and the driver needs to use equipment e.g. a hoist, to transfer the passenger into and out of the car.

#### Considerations

- Although the disabled person or passenger may meet the above guidelines they may not have sufficient room within the boundary of their front garden to create a hard standing of sufficient size to allow for parking a car and transfer space or it may not technically be feasible to create a hard standing due to the geography of the person's property.
- It is not unreasonable to expect that an able bodied driver could double park to set down a disabled passenger and remove the vehicle afterwards. Although this may entail a short term obstruction, as it is neither 'unnecessary' nor 'wilful' it is unlikely to be considered to constitute an offence.

## 1.2 Disabled Persons' Parking Space

Description: A Disabled Persons' Parking Space provides a road marking to draw attention to the fact that a disabled person with restricted mobility resides at the adjacent property. This is an advisory road marking with no legal backing, although they have been successful in helping disabled drivers to park as close as possible to their home.

Applications for Disabled Parking spaces must be made to:

Halton Borough Council  
Traffic Management Section (DPPS)  
Rutland House  
Halton Lea  
Runcorn  
WA7 2GW

### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach, taking account of cost effectiveness issues
- A crossover or hard standing cannot be constructed within the disabled persons front garden AND
- To qualify for a Disabled Person's Parking Space the person must be in receipt of the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance and have a vehicle registered at the address.

### Considerations

- There must be no possibility of off street parking being provided at the property (e.g. a front garden of sufficient depth for conversion and provision of a vehicle crossover and hard standing).
- Although the disabled person/carers may meet the above guidelines, it may not be possible for the provision to be made due to traffic restrictions.
- The disabled person should be made aware that the disabled person's parking space is an advisory road marking and has no legal backing.

## 1.3 Ramps

Description: This is a platform and sloped pathway, with handrails and up stands that provide access for wheelchairs from door to path / pavement level at the most appropriate entrance to the property.

Permanent ramps are usually made of concrete and will replace any existing access provision such as steps.

Semi-permanent ramps are usually made of metal, fibreglass or plastic. They are usually installed over the existing arrangement i.e. steps and are left in place until no longer required. They can be removed and reused. N.B be aware of the problems associated with placing metal ramps on grass. Provision of a wooden ramp is not appropriate, as there is no BS standard to check against.

### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- Where the disabled person is a permanent wheelchair user OR
- The disabled person has stepped access to their home and is unable to manage steps safely or independently so that wheelchair access is necessary AND
- The provision will assist the disabled person to be independent OR
- The provision of a ramp will assist the carer to transfer the disabled person in and out of the home AND
- Where it is possible to construct a ramp to the current building regulations and no steeper than 1:12

### Considerations

- Ramps are provided for disabled people who are completely reliant upon a wheelchair for mobility and the wheelchair was prescribed by the wheelchair service.
- The disabled person with a mobility difficulty may find it easier to negotiate a couple of steps rather than walk on a sloping surface.
- Where the disabled person is able to walk short distances and negotiate steps with the assistance of helpers, a ramp may not be necessary. However frequency of use should be taken into account.
- Ramps would not be provided for disabled people who require a wheelchair for outdoor use only i.e. for mobilising over distances, or for disabled people where their carer is able to safely manoeuvre an attendant operated wheelchair (9L) over the door threshold and down the step(s). Assess the ability of the person and/or their carer to manage the wheelchair on the ramp.

- An environmental home visit is required to check which is the most appropriate entrance to be ramped. Assess the width of door, the overall height of steps to door, which way the door opens, length of available space (allow an additional 1200 mm for a level platform outside the door). A joint visit or discussion with a technically competent person is recommended.
- Particular care needs to be taken concerning structure, design and location of the ramp to ensure its safe use, not only by the disabled person, but also by other members of the public. NB the platform and ramp cannot impinge on public pavements.
- In some circumstances provision of a ramp may be contra-indicated e.g. where the gradient would be too steep. An individual risk assessment of the situation must be completed.
- Note the tenure of the property, as consent for the ramp to be constructed may be required from the landlord.
- A follow up visit must be completed when the ramp is in place to check that it is safe and suitable for the disabled person's needs.
- If a disabled person buys their own powered scooter to allow independent leisure activities, shopping etc it will be expected that they make their own arrangements for access / storage of this equipment within, or outside, the property at the time they buy the scooter.

### Design considerations

- Steps may need to be provided adjacent to the ramp for other users who are ambulant, and who do not find a ramp easy to climb. It is essential to retain steps if the access is communal; this is in accordance with Part "M" of the building regulations.
- The provision of a ramp may necessitate looking at gate opening, direction of opening and threshold adaptations.
- Ramps should be constructed to The Building Regulations 2000 Part M (Access and facilities for Disabled People) or BS 8300: 2001 standard.
- A dropped kerb in the area may be needed, therefore refer to the Highways Department
- Fire regulations may need to be considered and fire exits and ramps being positioned appropriately e.g. in sheltered housing blocks.

## SECTION 2            LIFTS            INTERNAL & EXTERNAL

**Halton Borough Council's adaptation policy sets out a clear intention that a stepped approach will be taken when proposing adaptations that will meet a disabled persons needs.**

**The first consideration when proposing adaptations is whether the changes can be incorporated within the existing footprint of the person's property.**

**Providing a suitable stairlift or through floor lift supports this policy when it is technically feasible to fit a lift that will meet the disabled person's current and future needs.**

### **2.1    Stairlift**

Description: Stairlifts are powered lifts mounted on stair fixed tracks that follow the line of the stairs. They are used for transferring a disabled person between the internal floors of their home to gain access to essential facilities that are suitable for the disabled person needs or can be adapted. There are various types:

- For use when standing.
- With a seat for sitting.
- With a seat for perching.

#### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach, taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- The disabled person has extreme difficulty climbing the stairs and their health or safety is at risk, OR
- The disabled person needs to get to a different level to use essential facilities AND
- The disabled person is able to transfer independently, or with minimal assistance i.e. a hand hold, on and off the stairlift AND
- The disabled person can maintain their sitting position for the length of time it takes to use the lift AND
- The disabled person has the cognitive and functional ability to use the lift safely and appropriately, including using the controls and fastening the seat belt, with supervision if necessary.



## 2.2 Step Lift

Description: This is a platform with rails on two sides. It is either set into a shallow pit for access or has an automatic fold-down ramp. It may also have integral steps. It moves in a vertical line and is appropriate for short rises e.g. from 2-4 steps up to 1 metre, dependent on the brand. These lifts can be used for ambulatory or wheelchair users.

### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- The disabled person is unable to use stairs or steps with minor adaptations AND
- There is insufficient space to provide a ramp of appropriate gradient at the appropriate entrance and/or to reach essential areas of the home AND
- A stairlift is considered inappropriate.

## 2.3 Vertical lift – with seat or for wheelchair use

Description: These lifts carry the disabled person between two levels in a partially enclosed car, mounted on vertical wall tracking. There are a variety of designs available.

### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach, taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- A stairlift is considered inappropriate following a full risk assessment, due to the layout of the home or the disabled person's current condition or their deteriorating condition leading to an inability to transfer on/off a stairlift or other family members ability to use the stairs AND
- There is a need for access to essential facilities on the first floor AND
- There is adequate circulation space both for the provision of the lift and for the manoeuvrability of a wheelchair into the lift (if required) and retain access to all the facilities needed by the disabled person and their family.

**ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE: The decision to select a lift as an appropriate adaptation or the type of lift chosen may be guided by the following factors:**

- The disabled person with a progressive medical condition where their ability to transfer on/off or in/out of the lift independently may fluctuate or deteriorate over time.
- If a disabled person has a condition that is likely to deteriorate to the point that independent transfers are no longer possible then a vertical lift or ground floor facilities may be more realistic option for managing their long term needs.
- People with palliative care needs
- The disabled person with severe epilepsy or frequent blackouts or giddiness.
- Where there are very young children in the household.
- The disabled person who is confused or disorientated and lives alone.
- The disabled person who has poor sitting/standing balance, uncontrolled or unpredictable movements and the inability to maintain a good sitting posture during the time taken to use the lift.
- A level of anxiousness that is not resolved by trial use.
- Children with multiple disabilities who require hoisted transfers and have poor head and trunk control.
- Uncontrollable pets in the household.
- If the property has WC and bathroom facilities on the ground floor and sufficient space to create a bedroom downstairs then consideration of a lift may not be appropriate.

It should be stressed that before any lift is considered a risk assessment should be carried out on each individual case to provide a balanced decision during the assessment process. A disabled person's diagnosis alone is insufficient to decide against proposing the use of a lift for example a disabled person with epilepsy alone is not refused a stairlift just because of their diagnosis.

N.B. The above list is not exhaustive

Considerations for all Lifts

- An environmental assessment of the home should be completed with a lift representative to check that it is technically possible to fit a lift that meets the user's needs and is compatible with the home environment and the rest of the family's needs.
- The property should be suitable for the installation of a lift, or the stairs can be modified to accommodate a lift, and leave sufficient space for other family members to be able to use the stairs safely. This may entail consideration of charging points so that the lift can be parked unobtrusively to allow stair access. Check that other family members living in the home or providing care can use the stairs with the stairlift in place.
- The disabled person must be given the opportunity to try out the proposed lift and used it safely. This includes their ability to transfer safely on/off and in/out the lift, use the controls and put on and fasten any seat belts The Independent Living Centre has a selection of lifts with different features to try out with disabled people.

- The disabled person's ability to transfer safely and independently must be assessed. Transfers must be from and onto a level area.
- Consider the weight of the disabled person and check the compatibility of the proposed lift. If there are 2 users on the same property consider the weight of the heaviest person. If the disabled person's weight is close to the limit take a detailed history outlining weight gain, as it may be appropriate to consider alternatives.
- If there are 2 users within the same property ensure that the lift will meet both of their needs.
- Building regulations and the home environment are important factors in the choice of lift e.g. stair width, bulkheads, bends in stairwell, pinch points on kite winder stairs, number of floors, room for transfers at top and bottom of the stairs, trapping hazards and other Health & Safety issues.
- The chair of a stairlift must come level with the top stair and not onto a landing and then leave one or two steps.
- If the disabled person lives alone they should plan what they would do in the case of an emergency.
- A coin-operated meter on the electricity supply presents a hazard and may preclude the installation of a lift. Alternative payment methods should be investigated to ensure a continuous electrical supply. All lifts must have a dedicated power supply and battery back up. Stairlifts should always be parked in their docking position to ensure that the battery is kept charged. Usually lifts are alarmed to alert that they are not docked properly.
- Considerations should be given to the disabled person's current and future mobility potential.
- Consider the need for carers to travel with the disabled person in a vertical lift.
- Consider the ongoing needs of a growing child.
- The disabled person should inform their insurance companies when a lift is to be installed and arrange to take out additional cover for fire and other damage, and to cover against accidents to people due to the use of the lift.
- The disabled person should be aware if there are any servicing and maintenance responsibilities applicable to them.
- Advise the disabled person to change their stair carpet prior to any stairlift installation rather than afterwards as the rail is bolted to the stairs and not onto the wall.
- Weather proofing for external lifts.
- Lifts for communal/external areas should be tamper proof.
- Lifts in communal stairways should leave space for safe use of the stairs, particularly in case of fire.
- Consent from other tenants will be required.
- Extra space may be required form shallow pits for some lifts

A full and balanced risk assessment should be carried out prior to any lift installation and it must clearly show that all factors have been considered and any reasons for selecting an alternative adaptation rather than the lift.

## **SECTION 3 BATHROOM ADAPTATIONS: Baths, showers and toilets**

**This section looks at providing adaptations to meet a disabled person's functional ability to maintain personal hygiene and/or to assist carers. As with other types of equipment a tariff of options will be considered ranging from the most cost effective equipment available through to major adaptations.**

### **3.1 Fixed Bath Hoist**

Description: Floor-fixed bath hoists may be powered or mechanically operated and have a seat (or slings) attached to a vertical column which usually slots into a base plate at the side or the end of the bath. The height of the column can be adjusted and the seat swivels to enable the person to transfer onto it from outside the bath. The seat is then raised so that it clears the bath rim and is lowered down into the bath.

Manual hoists are operated by a winding handle designed to be operated by a carer, although it may be possible for the bather to use some models independently. Powered hoists either use mains electricity and will require a power point outside the bathroom or a rechargeable battery that will need charging regularly. The controls may be operated independently by the bather using a handset.

#### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach, taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- Standard bath equipment has been trialled and is inappropriate due to the disabled person's degree of functional loss AND
- The disabled person can transfer safely onto the hoist and maintain a functional seating position comfortably
- The disabled person will be independent in personal care OR
- It makes it safer and easier for a carer to assist the disabled person manage their personal care AND/OR
- Standard bath equipment is incompatible with the family/domestic situation.

#### Considerations

- Where the disabled person has a medical need or skin condition requiring treatment and it is reasonable to maintain a bath to soak

## 3.2 Specialist Baths

Description: Removal of existing bath and replacement by specialist bath.

**Bath with integral lifting seat:** this type of bath has a lifting seat incorporated into the structure of the bath so that there is no need for the person to get up or be helped up from the bottom of the bath. The seat raises and lowers; all but a few seats have a fixed backrest which makes reclining back in the bath difficult. Some seats incorporate a leg rest to lift the legs over the bath rim. When the seat has been raised above the bath rim, it can be swivelled outwards, either manually or automatically, for easier transfer. The height of the seat edge is important, especially for people who need to brace their knees in order to stand upright, or who need a level transfer from a wheelchair seat. A few systems have the facility to raise and lower the seat outside the bath.

These baths are powered either by water pressure or mains electricity. The lift can be controlled by the bather or a helper using a handset. If the system is electrically powered, a safe air switch is used.

Baths in this section fit against a wall or are free standing and have a swivel, slide or reclining seat incorporated into the structure of the bath. They are mounted on either a central or corner pole. When a swivel seat is raised above the level of the bath rim, it can be turned to overhang the bath edge; some seats have fold up armrests to facilitate sideways transfers. Seat raising and lowering is electrical or mains water pressure powered. Other inbuilt seat types are intended to slide in the bath and some have a reclining backrest.

**Height adjustable bath:** The height of these baths can be adjusted, either mechanically or electrically. They are designed to reduce the need for a carer to bend over the bath if the person needs assistance. The bather may be able to step into the bath at its lowest level and then be raised to a convenient height. However, remember that the water usually needs to drain away before the bather can get out. These baths are not often used in a domestic setting.

The baths in this section are standard bath style and are adjustable in height by manual or powered operation. Some may be used in conjunction with a hoist or other lifting equipment.

### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- Standard bath equipment has been trialled and is inappropriate due to the disabled person's degree of functional loss. The disabled person should have the ability to transfer safely and maintain a functional seating position comfortably OR
- Where the use of the bath is shared and the carer is unable to lift portable equipment safely in and out of the bath AND

- The use of a ceiling track or mobile hoist is appropriate AND
- Safe transfer into a bath is still likely to be possible if client's condition deteriorates OR
- More than one client in the household would benefit and equipment will be shared, therefore reducing the need to use multiple equipment.

### Considerations

- The bath must be sited where the disabled person will continue to gain access if their mobility deteriorates.
- The carer's needs must be considered when washing a disabled person with a severe disability.
- The functional skills needed to get into a specialist bath are generally similar to those needed to use an ordinary bath fitted with standard equipment.  
Therefore, the provision of a specialist bath should be carefully considered and only provided in exceptional circumstances.
- The time taken for the bath to fill and drain may have an effect on the disabled person's body temperatures.
- There may be circumstances where the removal of facilities and the provision of a standard metal bath are required.
- The disabled person should be aware of the maintenance requirements.
- Consider the location of taps and plug release.

### Technical Considerations

- Due to the size of the equipment, the provision may not be a practical solution where space is lacking.

### 3.3 Over-bath showers

Description: The provision and installation of a shower over the bath that meets the BS8300: 2001 recommendations e.g. anti-scald, thermostatically controlled over-bath shower unit.

#### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach, taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- Bath equipment has been considered and tried and is inappropriate due to the disabled person's degree of functional loss AND
- The disabled person has been encouraged to try all feasible options, AND
- The disabled person is able to safely transfer on and off a bathboard or swivel bath seat independently and remain sitting safely OR
- The disabled person can step over the side of the bath, with or without equipment, and remain standing for the duration of a shower AND
- It is unnecessary to remove the bath for a shower to enable the disabled person to become independent and to relieve carers of difficulties AND
- The disabled person is able to gain access to the bathroom and no long term difficulties are envisaged AND
- It enables the disabled person to attend to their personal care needs independently or with minimal assistance.

#### Considerations

- Some people with severe epilepsy may be considered for an over bath shower depending upon the nature and history of their condition as a safety feature
- A shower over the bath could continue to be used if the bath is removed and a level assess shower tray or 'wet area' is installed at a later date. To enable this to happen, consideration should be given when siting the controls.
- When siting the controls determine whether the shower will be used independently by the disabled person or by their carer, as this will affect the position of and height of the shower controls.
- A shower curtain and extra wall tiles to prevent wall damage.
- The disabled person should always be issued with and instructed to use equipment e.g. shower board/swivel bather in order to safely use the overbath shower.
- The provision of slip resistant flooring may be required.
- The disabled person should be made aware of the maintenance requirements.

- Other family members need to continue to use the bath e.g. young children in the family.

### Technical Considerations

- A humidistat may be required.
- Temperature control – the Health & Safety Executive recommended a temperature of no more than 41°C to reduce the risk of scalding.

### **3.4 Level Access Shower**

#### Description:

The provision and installation of level showering facilities with an anti scald device, thermostatically controlled with height adjustable showerhead.

Level access showers have an entrance threshold of less than 1cm. They are therefore easy to negotiate independently e.g. in a self propelling shower chair, and put less stress on a carer's back when they are pushing the person into the shower area. There is more risk of water falling outside the tray with level access shower trays. Try to ensure that the tray is sufficiently large to take account of the fact that the shower curtains will billow outwards slightly as the shower water hits them.

Some level access bases are designed to fit in the space where a bath stood, so that the drainage from the bath is already in place. Others require under floor drainage to be installed. They often have a pump over the drainage hole to draw the waste water towards it. Pumps can be noisy.

Level access trays or grilles can be set into a wooden or solid floor. As there is no hob or ramp, they provide the easiest access for walking users, or those using shower chairs. There is, however, more risk of water falling outside the tray. Screens and doors are designed to minimise this. Ensure that the water can be drained as fast as it leaves the shower spray unit. Manufacturers do not recommend the use of power showers in level shower areas as the drainage cannot cope with the water flow.

Examples include:

- Special shower tray with level access.
- Specialist shower cubicle with integral level access and with relevant accessories available such as seat, doors etc.
- Shower room with graded/dished, slip resistant floor, with appropriate accessories.

#### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- Bath equipment to transfer safely into a bath or use an over bath shower has been considered/tried and is inappropriate due to the disabled person's degree of functional loss AND



- The disabled person has been encouraged to try all feasible options AND
- The provision will enable the disabled person to maintain their independence in personal care with or without carers' help.

### Considerations

- The shower must be sited where the disabled person will continue to gain access if their mobility deteriorates.
- If the disabled person is likely to become or are already wheelchair users, it is best to consider a shower room with a graded/dished/slip resistant floor.
- In most circumstances, the disabled person will need to sit whilst showering.  
Consideration must therefore be given to the provision of adequate space and the strength of the shower tray, if used.
- Consider the stability of the freestanding shower chair.
- To prevent carers/helpers from becoming wet whilst assisting the disabled person, half height shower screens or curtains should be provided.
- The controls are located to ensure use by either the disabled person &/or carers – it can be difficult to achieve a position for both to use comfortably.
- Consideration should be given to the rest of the family before a bath is removed.
- Freestanding shower seats often provide the most versatility within the shower area and can be changed easily if the disabled person's needs change.
- Sufficient tiling is required in all wet areas.

### Technical Considerations

- Shower cubicles have some disadvantages i.e. steep ramp, limited space inside for footrests or non-standard chairs and they are contra-indicated for people prone to spasms.
- Adequate room heating should be provided for this type of adaptation.
- Temperature control – the Health & Safety Executive recommend a temperature of no more than 41°C to reduce the risk of scalding.
- Include adequate ventilation within the shower room
- If grab rails and a wall fitted shower seat are required, it is necessary to ensure that the walls of the shower are strong enough to take them and that adequate screws e.g. stainless steel are used.
- The disabled person must be made aware of the need to clean and maintain the pump and /or filter and waste pipe according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

### 3.5 Combined WC/Shower Unit

Description: A cubicle containing a WC with an overhead shower with a height adjustable shower head. The shower can be used while sitting on the WC or by using a shower chair with a commode aperture.

The cubicle will have sealed shower doors to minimise water spillage into the surrounding area, a pump will often be added to actively draw the water towards the drain. It is advisable to have some waterproof flooring immediately outside the area of the cubicle.

Care should be taken over the choice of other equipment used on plastic shower trays, especially stools with four separate legs, because of the risk of puncturing the tray. Flat based shower chairs should be chosen in preference. Check the maximum weight limit of the tray. Some companies will strengthen them for heavy users.

#### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- The disabled person meets the criteria for an additional WC and for a shower, however limitations of the accommodation and/or family considerations preclude the provision of each as separate facility AND
- The property is otherwise suitable for the disabled persons needs AND
- The disabled person/carers have the ability to maintain the pump and change the filter.

#### Considerations/Technical

- A non-ambulant disabled person may find the ramp into the cubicle difficult to negotiate.
- Wheelchair users may find the depth of the cubicle too small for non-standard self-propelling wheelchairs and they are contra-indicated for people prone to spasms.
- The provision of a separate room to provide these amenities should be sought in the first instance as detailed in the Department of the Environment and Department of Health Joint Circular 10/90.
- Consider the temperature control of the unit.

## Toilets

Description: The three types of toilet (WC) that can be provided are:

- Additional (standard) WC.
- Specialised WC.
- Combined WC/shower as described in previous section.

### 3.6 Additional (Standard) WC on the ground floor

Description: A standard WC pan with seat. Recommended height sizes are measured from the finished floor level to the top of the WC pan. Usual sizes are: 380mm, 400mm and 420mm.

#### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- The disabled person's functional ability to reach the existing WC facilities is severely restricted due to the nature of their disability AND
- Where access to existing amenities cannot be provided AND
- The provision would give the disabled person dignity and independence in toileting AND
- There is a permanent medical condition affecting frequency/urgency of micturition and/or bowels and the need to get to the toilet quickly AND
- Other equipment e.g. chemical toilet or special commode have been considered/tried and are not appropriate AND
- The disabled person is sleeping on the ground floor, is using a commode and is unable to access the first floor WC facilities.

#### Considerations/Technical

- A wash hand basin must be sited near the WC to comply with building regulations.
- The needs of children with disabilities, who have difficulty managing the stairs independently AND are undertaking toilet training to increase their independence will be considered
- Requests for first floor facilities, in addition to ground floor facilities, are not considered
- In a corner WC arrangement, the flushing mechanism should be positioned on the open or transfer side of the pan for ease of use.

### **3.7 Specialist WC**

Description: An automatic WC that provides flushing, warm washing and drying from one operation i.e. it combines the functions of a WC and a bidet with an additional drying facility.

#### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- The disabled person is unable to maintain proper hygiene after toileting due to the degree of functional loss AND
- The use of any equipment has been trialled and is unsuccessful AND
- The provision would give the disabled person an appreciable degree of independence in toileting/personal hygiene AND
- The provision would relieve the need for a carer and maintains the disabled person's dignity AND
- The disabled person has tried a special WC and finds it an acceptable solution.

#### Considerations/Technical

- It is possible to use a special WC with a shower chair but this has to be decided at the time of installation, as the WC must be raised on a plinth.
- The disabled person should be made aware of the servicing and maintenance requirements associated with this installation and that it is possible to obtain extended warranties to cover costs if required.
- In a corner WC arrangement, the flushing mechanism should be positioned on the open or transfer side of the pan for ease of use.

## SECTION 4 OVERHEAD HOISTS

Description: An electric hoist that is suspended from a length of overhead tracking fitted in one of three ways.

- Ceiling fitted – straight, curved and XY system.
- Wall fixed when the ceiling is structurally inadequate.
- Gantry fixed supported by floor standing posts

The hoist usually assists with bed, chair, wheelchair, bath, commode and WC transfers.

### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach, taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- The disabled person is non-weight bearing and has severely limited function in arms and legs making transfers a problem AND
- Mobile hoists, fixed position hoists and other simple lifting equipment have been considered/ tried and are inappropriate due to the degree of client's functional loss, the capacity of carers or lack of space AND
- The provision will increase the disabled person's independence in transfers OR
- The provision will support carers and minimise risk of injury AND
- There is an identified person/people willing and able to be trained responsibility for operating the equipment safely. (This could be the disabled person or carer)

### Considerations

- The provision is dependent on structural feasibility; the company and/or surveyor or structural engineer usually gives this advice.
- The different options available as described above.
- The disabled person's dignity in relation to multiple transfers.
- The disabled person cognitive ability to use this provision safely.
- The needs of carers and the number of carers required for transfers.
- The time taken to carry out multiple transfers.
- Room layout
- It may be preferable to provide hoists in two rooms instead of continuous tracking between rooms e.g. from bed to WC.
- It is advisable to have a written moving and handling care plan in the home that is recognised and approved by formal and informal carers who will be using the equipment.
- Discuss with the user an alternative plan in case of an emergency.
- The hoist should be maintained as per LOLER regulations and a competent person should regularly check the hoist and slings.

## **SECTION 5            GENERAL ALTERATIONS OR EXTENSIONS TO LIVING SPACE**

When considering the need for adaptations the following stepped approach will be used:

- Look to adapt within the existing footprint of the property. All rooms will be considered and they may be adapted from their original use to provide bedroom and/or WC/shower/ bathroom facilities. Where there has been previously two separate rooms which have been converted into a through room, the expectation would be that the room would be restored to its original condition as part of the adaptation, thus providing two rooms again – one of which would be used as a bedroom or WC/shower/bathroom for the disabled person
- Alternative housing will be considered where a more suitable property would remove the need for extensive adaptations or if adaptations are not technically feasible within the current property. Assistance can be given to help the disabled person to move to more suitable accommodation through the use of relocation grants (owner occupiers and private renters); accessible homes register for RSL tenants and others; support re-housing applications. With young people it is essential to discuss any plans they have to leave home and live independently.
- Where an extension is felt to be the best cost effective and appropriate solution, the use of a modular build extension will also be considered. This enables the adaptation to move with the disabled person if required or it can be returned and re-cycled if no longer needed

When using a DFG to provide major alterations to living space the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 section 23(1), (DFG) should be considered for the mandatory requirements.

### **5.1    Ground floor Bedrooms**

Description: The construction of an additional wheelchair accessible room to be used for sleeping in by a disabled person.

#### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- Re-housing has been considered and is found to be inappropriate or not possible AND
- The disabled person's functional ability to reach an existing bedroom is severely restricted due to the nature of their mobility AND

- Access to existing bedroom via a lift is not appropriate due to functional loss and/or environmental limitations AND
- There is only one reception room (living room or dining room) on the ground floor, and there is more than one person in the household  
HOWEVER
- Where there has been previously two separate rooms which have been converted into a through room, the expectation would be that the room would be restored to its original condition as part of the adaptation, thus providing two rooms again (if this provides a suitable room size that can be used by the disabled person) – one of which would be used as a bedroom for the disabled person OR
- Where there is a room suitable for conversion, but it would cause extreme stress to the family due to the loss of this room e.g. one family room is not of sufficient size for the whole family OR
- Where there is need to provide extra space for the disabled person due to severe behavioural management problems that cannot be resolved by any treatments and it is unacceptable for that person to share a room OR
- The existing room used by the client for sleeping in, is not of sufficient size for wheelchair manoeuvrability or other essential equipment

### Considerations

- The needs of the disabled person and their space requirements to accommodate equipment storage, workstation etc need to be considered, in addition to the design and layout of the property, to determine the best size and possible location of facilities
- The arrangement of furniture within the facility should allow accessibility and manoeuvrability of equipment e.g. wheelchairs and hoists.
- Location and height of windows should allow accessibility yet still provided privacy.
- The position and usability of the window latches for the client, and height and location of light switched and power points should conform to BS8300: 2001.
- Storage within the room should be accessible.
- An en-suite shower room may be considered if the existing shower / WC facilities cannot be accessed by the disabled person or adapted to become accessible.
- Access to the bedroom directly via the kitchen is not desirable on health and safety grounds.
- Where door access is provided from the bedroom to a garden a French door of sufficient width, with opening windows alongside will be the preferred option.

## 5.2 Ground floor WC and bathroom facilities

Description: The construction of an additional wheelchair accessible WC and bathroom to be used for personal hygiene needs by a disabled person.

### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- The disabled person meets the guidelines for requiring this facility AND
- Re-housing has been considered and is found to be inappropriate or not possible AND
- The disabled person's functional ability to reach an existing WC and bathroom is severely restricted due to the nature of their mobility AND
- Access to existing WC / bathroom via a lift is not appropriate due to the disabled person's level of functional loss and/or environmental limitations AND
- A room for sleeping in is also being provided on the ground floor AND
- Where there is not a second reception room on the ground floor, or a room suitable for adaptations (either upstairs or downstairs) HOWEVER
- Where there has been previously two separate rooms which have been converted into a through room, the exception would be that the room would be restored to its original condition as part of the adaptation, thus providing two rooms again – one of which could be used as a WC/bathroom for the disabled person OR
- Where there is a room suitable for conversion, but it would cause extreme stress to the family due to the loss of this room e.g. one family room is not of sufficient size for the whole family

### Considerations

- The needs of the disabled person and their space requirements to accommodate necessary equipment needs to be considered, in addition to the design and layout of the property, to determine the best size and possible location of facilities
- The arrangement of furniture within the facility should allow accessibility and manoeuvrability of equipment e.g. wheelchairs and hoists.



- Location and height of windows should allow accessibility yet still provided privacy.
- The position and usability of the window latches for the client, and height and location of light switched and power points should conform to BS8300: 2001.
- Adequate ventilation and heating should be provided – see section 3 for further considerations
- Access to the WC/bathroom directly via the kitchen is not desirable on health and safety grounds.

### **5.3 Kitchens**

Description: a wide range of adaptations can be considered to give the disabled person access to, and the use of, kitchen facilities. The extent of the adaptation should reflect the disabled person's abilities and needs.

#### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- The present kitchen is unsuitable for the client to prepare and cook food due to the height and position of work surfaces and facilities or lack of turning space for a wheelchair AND
- Equipment has been tried and is not suitable AND
- The disabled person has the physical ability and motivation to prepare and cook independently in a suitably adapted kitchen AND
- The kitchen is or will be accessible from the main living area by the client

#### Considerations

- Establish how the disabled person wishes to use the kitchen. If the disabled person did not work frequently in the kitchen prior to the assessment, was this through choice or because the kitchen was inaccessible?
- Adaptations will be provided to enable the use of the kitchen by the disabled person and not just to improve an inadequate kitchen.
- Is the disabled person the main kitchen user or will others be using the kitchen regularly? This will affect the extent of the adaptations possible.
- Where the main user is able-bodied, it may be possible to adapt a small section of the kitchen for the disabled person's use. For example a section of lower worktop to make a snack or hot drink. If both able bodied and disabled people use the kitchen to a similar extent then height adjustable units may be required.
- Appropriate flooring should be considered.
- Is a separate oven and hob required?

- A kitchen assessment should be undertaken before recommendations are made – either within the local rehabilitation unit or at the Independent Living Centre.

The following should help when determining the level of adaptation to be provided.

- **A Light Use** (i.e. preparing breakfast, snacks, hot drinks)
- **B Medium Use** (e.g. preparing one hot meal a day, doing laundry)
- **C Heavy Use** (i.e. preparing more than one meal a day, possibly for other family members, and resulting in independence from services etc)

### Technical

- You may wish to seek design guidance from specialist kitchen designers.
- Height adjustable units could be manual or electric depending on the disabled person's needs and how often they will need adjusting.

### Types of adaptations

- Ovens with an anti-tip shelf and non-spill trays
- Adjustable height units can be partial, fully adjustable, manual, electric or on brackets and are useful for:
  - Multi users
  - Those with a changeable condition over a period of time
  - Multi occupancy over a period of time
- Recessed plinths can be useful for wheelchair users with footplates. They give the disabled person access to base and wall units without losing circulatory floor space.

## SECTION 6 HEATING PROVISION

Description: Provision of source of heat to all areas of a home that the disabled person has access to and uses regularly.

### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach ,taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- The disabled person has a specific medical condition which severely affects body temperature and there is evidence that a lack of heating would lead to serious deterioration of the condition OR
- Conditions causing the disabled person to be a danger to themselves or others when using the existing heating e.g. hyperactivity, severe learning disability, severe loss of sensation OR
- A physical inability to manage the existing heating system OR
- Those with significant difficulties e.g. wheelchair users, frailty.

### Considerations

- Recent World Health Organisation recommendations for immobility are to provide heating capacity of 21°C in living rooms and 18°C in other rooms for thermal comfort.
- Moving from a warm room to a cols room can have a significant impact on function, for example, respiration. There is also evidence suggesting that the effects on joints and muscles at lower temperatures can make people clumsier and less co-ordinated and may be a factor in causing falls.

## **SECTION 7 MISCELLANEOUS**

### **7.1 Fencing**

Description: Appropriate fencing to enclose an area used by the disabled person.

#### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- Provision can only be considered where the disabled person's vulnerability is due to a disability / challenging behaviour and not due to developmental norms relating to their age AND
- The disabled person has a history of wandering beyond the property and is at risk OR
- To enable a disabled parent to look after their children.

#### Considerations

- Where there is simply a damaged fence due to wear and tear this will not be replaced or repaired.
- Alternative solutions are not practical or reasonable and the fencing would keep the disabled person in a safe environment.
- Fencing is not provided to keep out other people or dogs.

### **7.2 Lighting and Power**

Description: Adaptations to enable a client to have reasonable control over the use of lighting facilities or other mains electrical appliances. This may mean the relocation of lighting or power controls to accessible positions, or providing additional means of control. This may include relocation of prepayment meters if they are situated in inaccessible positions. The work may be required in the common parts of the building in which the client occupies a dwelling.

#### Types

- Touch switches
- Rocker switches
- Lever
- Pull cord
- Infra-red
- Raised/lowered sockets

## Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- The disabled person are unable to operate existing facilities and have to rely on others to operate them AND
- The disabled person has the ability to use adapted or re-sited controls.

## Considerations

- Extra lighting may be necessary to enhance residual vision of a client with a visual impairment to permit safe mobility within their own home or to enable them to manage daily tasks independently.
- If new lighting controls are being installed, consideration should be given to the height and position.
- Re-location of pre-paying meters may be provided free of charge for disabled people by some utility companies.

### **7.3 Widening Pathways**

Description: Widening an existing pathway to permit safe wheelchair access or flagging to provide a base for a semi-permanent ramp, within the boundary of the home, to facilitate access by the disabled person to and from the dwelling or the building in which the home is situated.

## Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- The disabled person has a mobility problem, and is at risk of falls OR
- The existing path is too narrow to permit wheelchair access and the disabled person or carers have difficulty manoeuvring the wheelchair as a result, or there is no path on which to provide a semi-permanent ramp AND
- The path is one used by the disabled person for access to the gate of the property or essential facilities.

## Considerations

- If the disabled person uses the path while walking, a galvanised rail may need to be installed
- Textured surfaces may be appropriate for the disabled person with a visual impairment.

- The width of the path should be sufficient to allow access for the disabled person and their carers – see BS8300: 2001.
- Where there is simply a damaged path due to wear and tear this will not be replaced or repaired.

## **7.4 Window Opening Devices**

Description: A manual or mechanical device that is fitted to an existing window, to allow opening/closing from an accessible point.

### Guidelines

- The disabled person meets the general eligibility criteria for adaptations AND the assessor has applied the stepped approach taking account of cost effectiveness issues AND
- When the disabled person is unable to open an existing window because of their disability (this could be due to the inaccessibility of the window or the design of the lock) and a manual window opener cannot be used.

### Considerations

- It is reasonable that not all windows in the property will be fitted with these devices and only in rooms that are regularly used by the client.
- Changes to the type of window installed would not be considered unless the window has no means of opening

## **APPENDIX 1      HOUSING TYPES AND FUNDING**

### **Owner Occupier**

Major adaptations are funded by a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) administered by the Housing Department of the Local Authority, not Social Services. If the property is leasehold then permission will have to be sought from the owner of the freehold and/or other leaseholders under the terms of lease.

A DFG is always means tested under Central Government rules – ‘relevant persons’

- If the client lives with a partner, then both of them will be financially assessed.
- The parents of a disabled person of any age, are not assessed, (the children’s means test rules, whereby parents were assessed, was abolished in December 2005)

### **Privately Rented Property**

Major adaptations will be funded as Owner-Occupiers. It is essential that the landlord give written permission for any proposed adaptations.

### **Registered Social Landlord (RSL) Property**

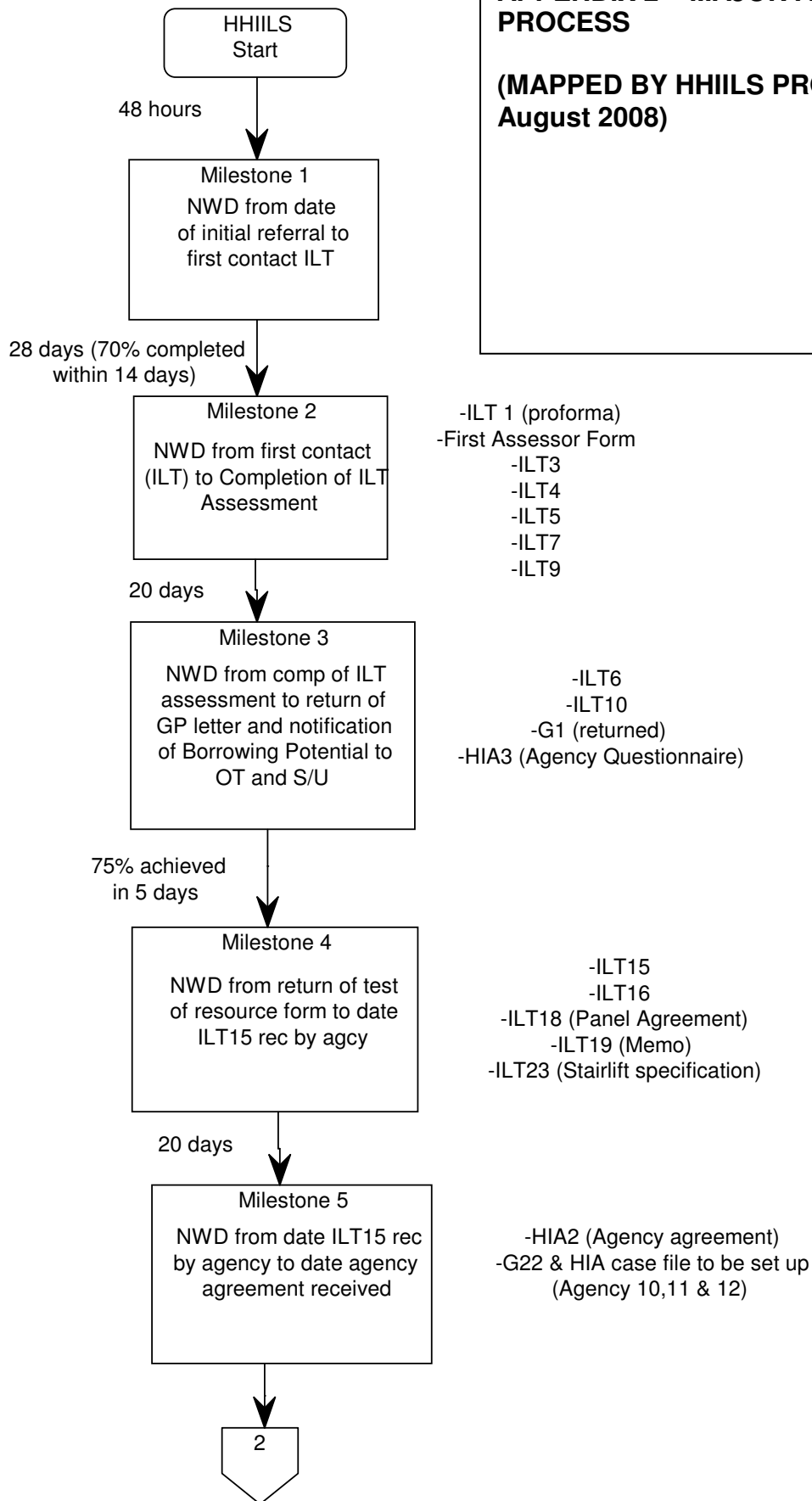
The disabled person living in RSL properties as tenants may receive assistance directly from the RSL (out of its revenue or capital reserves) or the RSL association may obtain a grant from the Housing Corporation. However, unless Regional Corporation Boards have made adaptations a priority, the Housing Corporation does not give grants in that region. Where, as in London, the regional Housing Board has priorities adaptations, the Housing Corporation Regional Office exercises its discretion as to whether to give a grant.

Some authorities will offer to move people into more appropriate properties rather than undertake major adaptations.

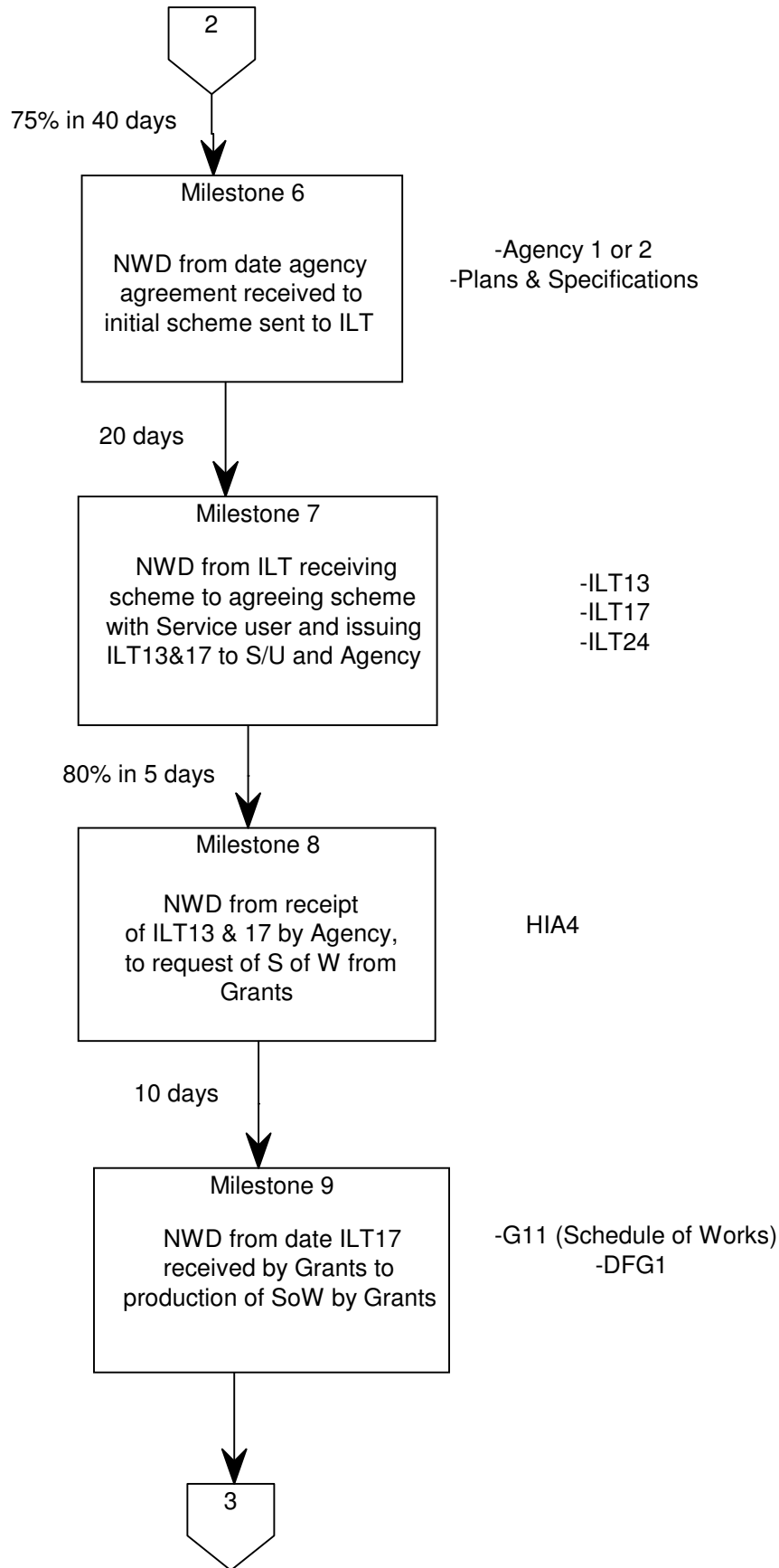
Nevertheless, if all else fails, the landlord or the tenant can apply for a DFG. This, for example, it would not be lawful to prevent a housing association tenant applying for DFG (ODPM 2004, para 3.26).

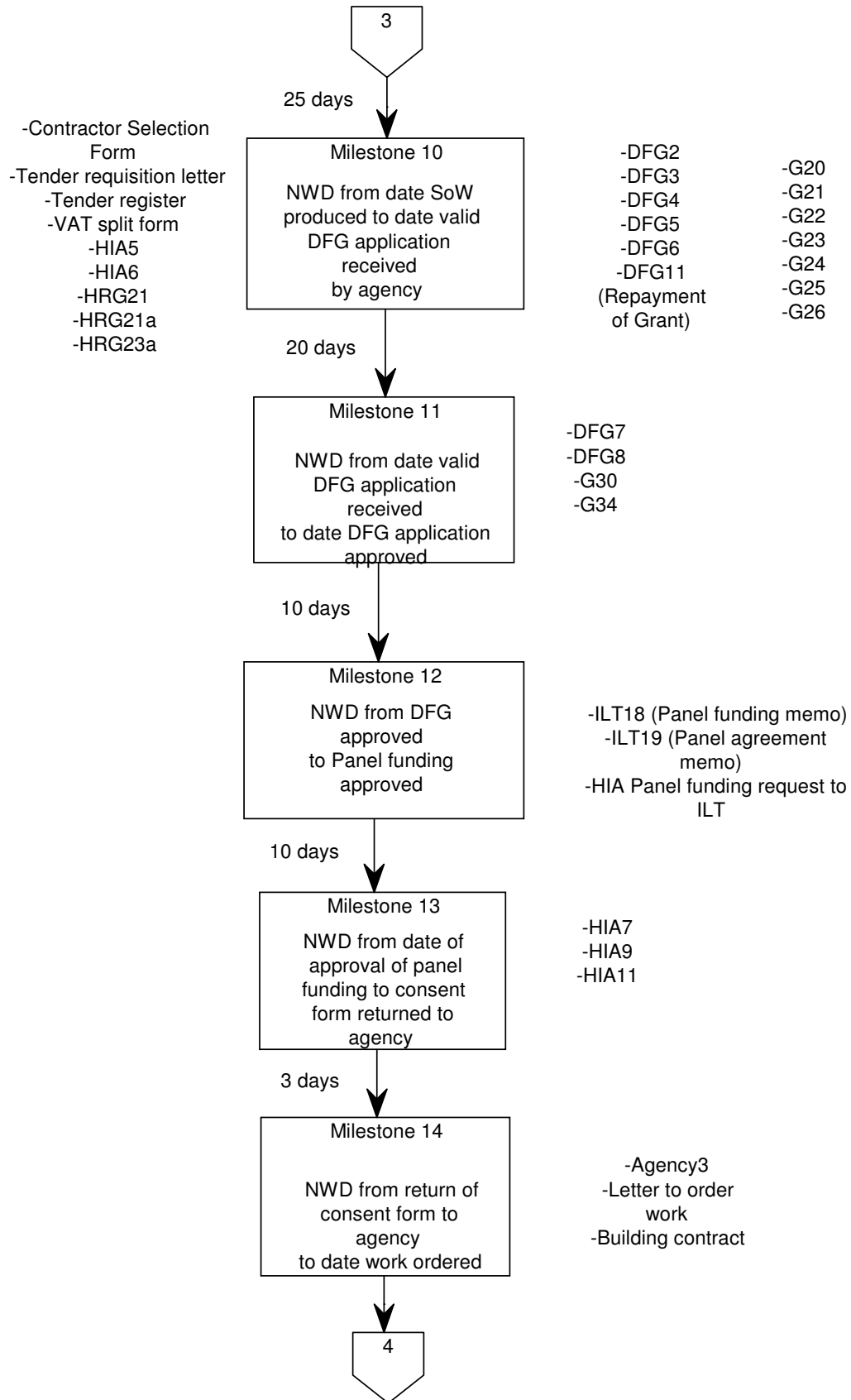
## APPENDIX 2 – MAJOR ADAPTATIONS PROCESS

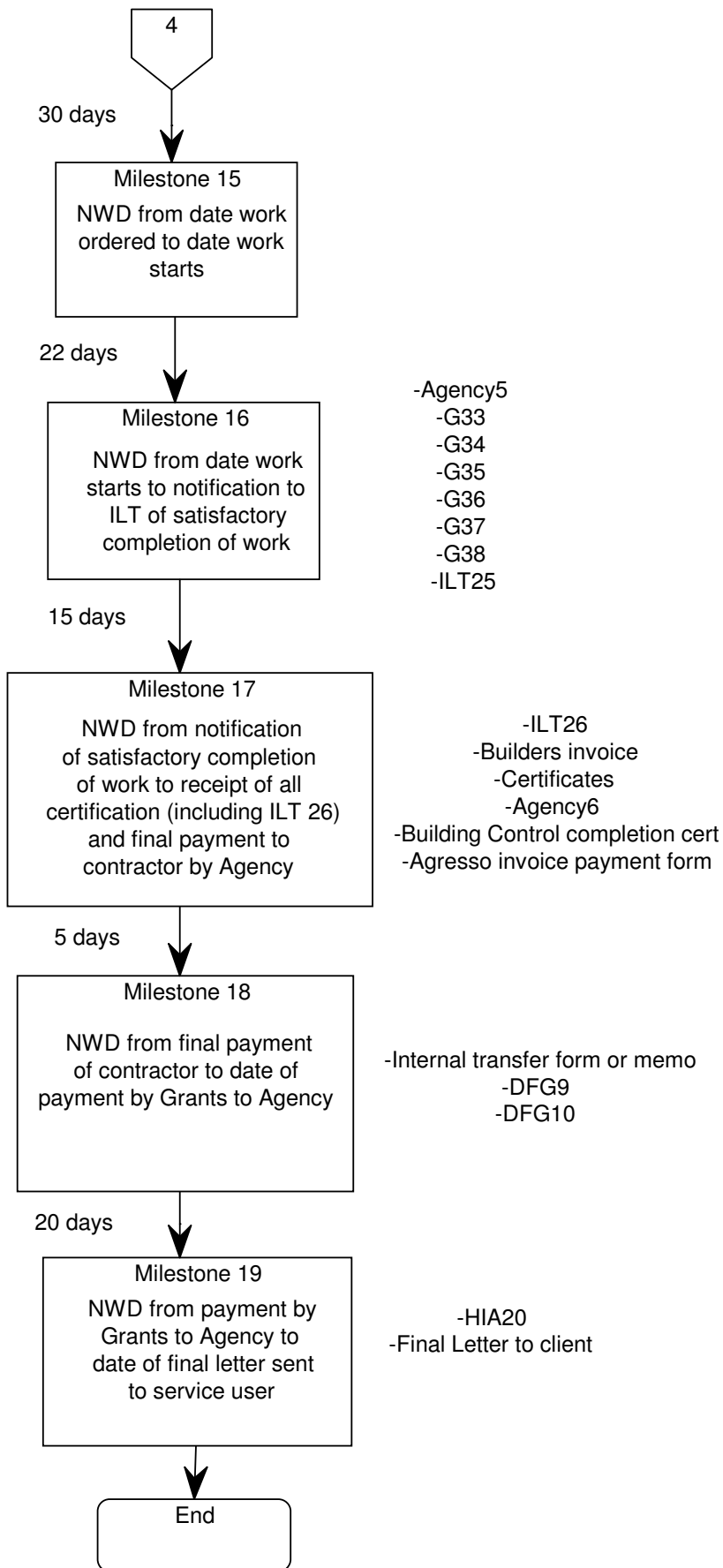
(MAPPED BY HHILS PROCESS GROUP August 2008)











### **APPENDIX 3            DISABLED PERSON'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTENANCE AND WARRANTIES**

It is essential that the disabled person be given clear information as to who is responsible for maintenance of any adaptation.

This will vary depending on:

- Type of adaptation.
- Property types and how the works were funded.

In general, if a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funds an adaptation, the disabled person will assume full responsibility for maintenance, repair and removal (if necessary).

If there is electrical equipment e.g. stairlift, specialist WC etc, it is advisable to include in the DFG application, an element for an extended warranty for four years, giving an overall cover for five years (local agreement).

The disabled person must agree to take responsibility for arranging the servicing and repair and told what the approximate cost of these items will be to them, once the warranty has come to an end. It may in some circumstances be necessary to explain to the disabled person that servicing is not just about maintenance of the hardware, but may be about the safety of the disabled person, informal carers and paid carers.

Should the item need replacing at any time, another application can be made for a DFG.

**N.B.** If the disabled person feels that they will be unable to pay the costs of servicing or repair of an adaptation obtained through a DFG, Social Services may have to negotiate a way forward before the works begin.

In Registered Social Landlord properties, practice varies. In principal it is arguable that the client retains responsibility for an adaptation obtained through a DFG, although some housing associations do agree to maintain some adaptations.

Clearly, if maintenance can be included in the DFG, then this solves the problem. Government guidance states that it is good practice for the cost of servicing and repair services to be secured by the local authority at the time of installation. It also states that this cost, when met by a single payment on commissioning, should be included in the calculation of any grant payable.

If an adaptation is provided on loan by the social services authority (rather than through a DFG), then it will be responsible for maintenance and repair. Alternatively, if an adaptation were obtained through DFG, but through a landlord rather than tenant application, then it would be the landlord that was responsible.