

WHAT IS A HOME ADAPTATIONS 'ADVOCATE'?

An advocate is someone who speaks on behalf of another person.

Is an advocate always needed?

Many residents just need straightforward minor adaptations to their home such as handrails or lever taps which will be carried out quickly by maintenance staff from your own housing association or by a handyman. Most residents will be able to deal with the maintenance staff or contractors themselves. These people will not need an advocate.

When is an advocate needed?

- If the resident is ill, frail, finds it hard to communicate, has severe disabilities, and has no-one else to help them.
- If the work involves staff from other organisations e.g. OTs, architects, surveyors, outside contractors etc. – often with long delays between visits.
- If the work needed will require the tenant to apply to the council for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) or for charitable funding.
- If it is going to take several weeks or months to get an assessment, a survey and for work to be completed – i.e. long periods where the resident may not know what is happening.
- If the work is going to involve major disruption.

What does an advocate do?

- Explains the adaptations process – what is likely to happen and when.
- Acts as a single point of contact for the resident so that they know who to turn to during the process – if there are delays or complications, or if there is anything they don't understand
- Acts as a single point of contact for other professionals if they are unable to get hold of the resident directly.
- Helps the resident get the forms for DFG or charitable funding and, if needed, helps them fill in the forms (the OT or grants officer may also be able to help with this).
- Makes sure the tenant is kept informed of the progress of their case and progress chases if necessary.
- Makes sure the tenant has help to move furniture and prepare for the work to be carried out and for things to be put straight after work has been completed.
- Gives the resident a survey form to complete a few weeks after the work has been completed to gauge their satisfaction with the work, that they are confident using any adaptations or equipment installed, and to determine what impact the work has had on their ability to be independent. Ensure these forms are completed and returned.
- If the tenant prefers to move, or has to move because it is not possible for the home to be adapted, an advocate may be needed to help the resident apply for another property. This will involve helping them look at different housing options, and to consider how a move will affect their care and support, social networks, and use of local facilities.