

Every effort is made to have recommended items issued without delay. Equipment may not always solve the problem. You may have to consider alterations to your home, e.g. downstairs shower and toilet, widening doors or provide ramps if wheelchair access is needed. SHB staff are available to advise on these issues. Grants may also be available from the health board or local authorities in your area.

HOUSING AID FOR THE ELDERLY

This is a means tested scheme which aims to carry out minor works which are considered to be urgently necessary to improve the living conditions of elderly people living alone in unfit or unsanitary conditions. Further information is available from the public health nurse, community welfare officer or the Environmental Health Department, Southern Health Board.

LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHEMES

The local authorities operate the following schemes:

HOUSING (DISABLED PERSON'S AND ESSENTIAL REPAIRS GRANT) REGULATIONS 1993

Disabled Persons Grants are for the provision of additional accommodation or carrying out structural alterations to make a privately-owned house more suitable to the needs of a disabled member of the household. The maximum grant payable cannot exceed two thirds of the approved costs of the works subject to a maximum. Essential Repairs Grants are payable in respect of houses which are beyond economic repair and are also subject to a maximum expenditure for grant purposes.

For further information on the above please contact Cork or Kerry County Council or Cork City Council.



Promoting safety
and independence
in the home



Southern Health Board
Bord Sláinte An Deisceirt



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© SOUTHERN HEALTH BOARD CARERS' DEVELOPMENT UNIT, COFFA House, 21 Church Street, Shandon, Cork.
Tel: 021 4212019. Fax: 021 4212013. E-mail: carers@shb.ie www.shb.ie
Customer Information Lo call: 1850 742 000

Doing things differently in the home and the use of special equipment may make caring for a person easier. The person you are caring for may need to be encouraged to do as much as they can for themselves.

The following areas may cause problems:

- Getting dressed
- Personal care
- Personal safety
- Taking a bath
- Going up and down the stairs
- Getting on and off a chair
- Walking and balance.

Tips

BATHROOM AND TOILET:

- Take a bath when there is someone else in the house. That way you know help is there if needed
- Always use a non-slip mat in the bath or shower
- If you have a shower unit, it may be safer to use a shower seat rather than to stand
- Be extra careful on wet floors

- Never take electrical appliances into the bathroom, except shavers
- Leave the bathroom or toilet door unlocked
- A commode in your bedroom can save trips to the toilet during the night
- There are seats and grab rails available for the toilet and bath, which you may find useful.

STAIRS AND STEPS

- Hand rails fitted on both sides of the stairs can be helpful
- Check for worn or loose carpets and replace them if needed
- If a person uses a walking frame do not carry it on the stairs; keep a second one upstairs
- You can keep your hands free by carrying things in your pockets or use an apron with big pockets.

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

- Choose your clothes to suit your needs. Thermal underwear and more layers of clothes can keep you warm. Remember, a lot of body heat is lost through the head so you can wear a hat, even indoors, when it is very cold
- It is easier and safer to get a person dressed while sitting
- Loose clothes with front openings may be easier to get on and off
- If buttons and zips are a problem, try replacing them with Velcro fastenings
- Choose shoes wisely. Shoes that are laced or Velcro fastened, have a low broad heel and non-slip soles are both safe and comfortable

- Avoid shoes that slip up and down as you walk. Make sure that new shoes fit well and do not pinch your toes
- If slippers are worn then make sure they fit well
- If you or the person you are caring for has corns or sore areas on your feet visit your chiropodist/podiatrist or doctor.

FURNITURE AND FLOORS

- Many people who have difficulty walking lean on their furniture as they move about the house. A walking stick or walking frame may be safer
- Keep doorways, stairs and passage ways clear and tidy
- Rugs can be a hazard
- Eliminate trailing wires around the floor
- Good lighting, especially in the hall, stairs and landing is important
- Keep your bedside lamp within easy reach to switch on during the night
- Never stand on furniture or other objects to reach a high press or windows
- Keep floors dry.

SECURITY

- Have a safety chain and peephole fitted on your front door. Use them every time you open the door. A door intercom can be a helpful way to protect oneself
- Do not let unknown callers into your house, for whatever reason. Ask to see their Identification Card (I.D.). Take it and read it. If unsure refuse entry

- Do not keep large amounts of money or valuables in the house
- Phone the Gardaí if you are worried or suspicious
- Leave a spare key with a friend or neighbour. Do not leave keys under the doormat or on a string in your letterbox
- A bright porch light is a good idea
- Keep a telephone beside your bed. It is useful to have a list of telephone numbers near the telephone
- Join the Neighborhood Watch Scheme if available in your area
- Socially monitored alarm systems exist for older people who live alone (check with local associations such as Muintir Na Tire and Neighbourhood Watch or public health nurse or local community Garda).

MEDICAL AND SURGICAL EQUIPMENT AND APPLIANCES

A variety of aids and appliances are available to assist people with daily living activities.

A public health nurse, occupational therapist or physiotherapist will advise and assess your needs and subject to financial eligibility can order appropriate equipment or advise on where they can be purchased.

If a person or Carer has difficulty with moving or handling, personal care, seating or mobility contact a public health nurse, occupational therapist or physiotherapist for advice or further information.

