

Housing and housing adaptations - how can we help

If you have sustained a Spinal Cord Injury and you are planning your return home from hospital, you may face a number of challenges. Your home will require a range of adaptations in order for you to continue to live there independently. Typically this can include the following:

- Access to and from the property including ramps and widening doorways
- A lift
- Converting a bathroom into a wet room
- Kitchen adaptations so that you can cook and prepare food
- Improving or providing a suitable heating system
- Easier access to the garden

Completing this work can be an expensive process, so there may be a source of funding available from your local authority called a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

Council tenants and those living in private accommodation are eligible to receive a DFG, which is designed to fund the adaptations your home requires. The DFG is provided and administered by the housing department at your local authority. As long as all the relevant conditions have been met, housing departments are in theory obliged to approve DFG applications up to a maximum of £30,000 in England.

Some housing departments have the discretion to exceed this in certain circumstances. The application process is means tested and in our experience, most people rarely achieve the maximum grants available.

Our partnership with the charity Aspire

If you are concerned that you and your family will not have anywhere suitable to live after discharge from hospital, we can help by referring you to our partners at the charity Aspire.

Aspire is a national Spinal Cord Injury charity that offers practical support to the 40,000 people living with Spinal Cord Injury in the UK, so that they can lead fulfilled and independent lives in their homes, with their families, in work places and in leisure time.

The housing team based at the National Training Centre in Stanmore Middlesex and can help you with some of the housing problems you may be experiencing.



Aspire's website

The Aspire website can be found at www.aspire.org.uk. Here you will find lots of useful information on a whole range of issues.

Aspire's housing helpline

For help with queries about housing issues, please call the Aspire Housing Team on 0208 420 8950.

Welfare benefits

If you are concerned about how you are going to pay the mortgage or rent in the wake of an accident to yourself or the main earner in your family, Aspire's dedicated welfare benefits advice service will be able to help. They can provide information on the whole range of benefits to which you may be entitled, including housing and council tax benefit. The welfare benefit advice line number is 0208 420 6711, or you can email them on welfarebenefits@aspire.org.uk.

Aspire houses

The Aspire Housing Programme provides a nationwide network of fully adapted houses for spinally injured people to use whilst a permanent housing solution is being found. All the Aspire houses are fully accessible and come with wet rooms and adapted kitchens, but most importantly, they have two bedrooms so your family or personal assistant can stay with you.

To find out more about the Aspire Housing Programme you can contact a member of the team on 0208 420 8950.

How Aspire Law can help you

Aspire Law are expert Spinal Cord Injury solicitors. We act for a large number of clients who have sustained a Spinal Cord Injury due to someone else's fault. In these circumstances we are able to address housing/accommodation needs through the personal injury claim. We are often able to secure interim payments for this purpose, which helps our clients return home or to a new property as soon as practicable.

We employ the services of a number of specialist accommodation experts to include sourcing agents, architects and assistive technologists. These experts can locate a suitable property, design and build according to requirements and install all appropriate equipment. As well as any property being large enough and fully accessible, services can include separate carer/personal assistant accommodation, a therapy room/gym, a hydrotherapy pool, level grounds/accessible outbuildings and remote controls for such things as doors, curtains, cupboards and lighting. These measures ensure the home is both usable and comfortable and private; away from carers and personal assistants when preferred.

To find out what assistance might be available to you, contact us on 0800 030 20 40.

Client Stories

New accommodation for entire family of child born with tetraplegia

Our client was a child who had been born with tetraplegia and used a wheelchair to get around. He was living with his parents and siblings in one room at his grandparent's local authority home.

The family had been on the waiting list for suitable accommodation for four years because the local authority and a local housing trust could not agree who had responsibility for providing specially adapted accommodation.

We persuaded the local authority to cover the cost of adapting a suitable property provided by the housing trust. We engaged a housing expert to work with both parties to ensure the correct package of adaptations was provided.

Within six months, our young client and his family had moved into a fully adapted new home with adequate space for a wheelchair, a lift from the kitchen diner to the bedroom, an ensuite wet room, hoists, ramps and covered canopies.

Private rehabilitation and specially adapted accommodation

Our client (male 29 year old C6 complete following a road traffic accident), spent 5 months at the London Spinal Cord Injury Unit Stanmore before being transferred to the Wellington Hospital, for a further three months private rehabilitation arranged by us. His home was on the first floor of an apartment block and inaccessible by wheelchair.

During the time he spent in rehabilitation we instructed a case manager and property sourcing agent to locate a suitable property for him in North London - a large 4 bedroom flat was identified and funding obtained from the defendant insurer. The flat, on the ground floor, required some alteration and funding was again obtained from the defendant insurer for this.

In conjunction with the private funding available through the claim, the case manager engaged with local social services and the clinical commissioning group to ensure the client received all possible assistance with both care and equipment whilst at the property.

Call us free on: 0800 030 20 40 Email: help@aspirelaw.co.uk



Spinal Cord Injury Solicitors

www.aspirelaw.co.uk