

Integrated Housing Adaptations Team

Advice for Self-Funding Disabled Facilities Adaptations

Stairlifts

A stairlift installation might be required if a person is having significant difficulty with or is unable to climb or descend stairs. Opting to have a stairlift installed before a person becomes unable to use stairs can be a practical and cost-effective option for them in the long-term to enable them to remain safe and independent in their home.

Desired outcome

To enable the person to climb and descend the stairs safely, either independently or with an appropriate level of assistance from either a formal or informal carer.

Examples of stairlifts

Depending on the person's individual needs, they may require a specific type of stairlift and / or require additional features to modify it to suit their needs. Here are some common examples of types of stairlift and modifications that are available:

- Straight staircase stairlifts,
- Curved staircase stairlifts,
- Perch stairlifts,
- Powered swivel seat and active seat options,
- Reconditioned stairlifts.

Many stores offer a wide range of warranty and maintenance packages to suit individual preferences. It is also possible to rent stairlifts from independent stores.

Stairlift features

To follow is a list of stairlift features that can be modified to suit a person's individual needs. Considering these factors will help when choosing which stairlift is right for them. If you are uncertain about the person's needs, please note that these are all considerations that a qualified surveyor can answer themselves during a home visit.

1) Sitting upright

If a person finds it uncomfortable to sit upright, for instance, due to joint pain in hips, then having to get up and down from the stairlift seat may be undesirable. For this reason, it may be advisable to choose a perch stairlift which would give them support underneath the buttocks and allow them to stand as they ascend or descend the stairs. These stairlifts come with retractable seatbelts for security as a person travels.

2) Rising after sitting

If a person has difficulty rising after sitting, it may be advisable to choose a stairlift with a powered or active seat option which makes it easier for them to dismount the stairlift if they have limited mobility or find it difficult to rise unaided from seated. The seat gently rises as they dismount the stairlift, supporting their body as they arise.

3) Dexterity of hands

If a person has reduced dexterity or a lack of strength in their hands, for instance, due to arthritis, they may find using a manual swivel seat difficult as when the stairlift arrives at the top of stairs they will need to turn or swivel the seat around to ensure that they exit safely onto the landing, rather than in a precarious position at the top of stairs. A manual swivel seat is operated by a handle fitted on either side of the seat and needs to be either pulled up or pushed down. All stairlifts are fitted with manual swivel seats as standard. However, there is an option for a powered swivel seat and remote controls that the person uses to operate the stairlift and turn the swivel seat.

4) Weight limit

Most stairlifts have a weight limit of 18 stone. If the person weighs more than this, they will need a stairlift suitable for their weight that has been assured to transport them safely and effectively up and down the stairs, such as the Handicare Freecurve stairlift that comes with a heavy-duty motor assured to carry persons up to 21 stones.