# Stairlift survey and fitting: what happens on the day

A stairlift survey and fitting appointment is the point where a carefully chosen stairlift becomes a real, working part of the home. For anyone comparing curved refurbished stairlifts, the survey is also the moment when the practical details become clear: how the rail will follow the stairs, where the seat can rest, and whether the chosen model suits the space.

The survey usually comes before the fitting. Its job is to gather accurate measurements and identify any features of the staircase that affect installation. A straight staircase is fairly predictable, while a curved staircase may turn, narrow, have an uneven landing or include a short flight with a tight bend. Those details matter because the rail has to be made to match the route, not simply the height of the stairs.

This is where a Manchester-focused buying guide such as 2026 Buying Guide is useful for framing the questions to ask about reconditioned stairlift prices, refurbishment standards, warranties, funding and checks before purchase. The survey does not replace those checks. Instead, it turns them into practical decisions about fit, finish and day-to-day use.

## What happens during the survey

The first part is a careful look at the staircase and the areas around it. Measurements are taken along the route the lift will travel, including the run of the stairs, the turns and the space at each end. The goal is to work out the rail shape and the amount of clear space needed for the seat, footrest and passenger.

Stair width is one obvious point, but it is not the only one. A staircase can look wide enough until the handrail, wall fittings or a nearby door reduce the usable area. Landing space also matters, because the chair needs somewhere to stop without blocking a walkway or creating a trip hazard. On a curved stairlift, the rail may pass close to the opposite wall or a landing edge, so the survey needs to account for how the chair turns.




The survey also looks at where the lift can be parked when it is not in use. Many people want the chair to rest away from the main flow of the stairs. A powered hinge rail may be relevant where a rail extends into a doorway or passage, but whether it is suitable depends on the layout and the equipment involved. The person carrying out the survey should be able to explain the options in plain terms and point out any part of the plan that needs a decision.

Another area of discussion is the user's needs. A person who can stand easily may use a basic seat with little assistance. Someone with limited mobility may need a support that makes transfers safer, such as a seat that turns toward the landing or a belt that encourages a stable seated position. Seat swivel, folding footrest and safety belt arrangements are practical features, not luxuries, when they match the way the lift will be used.

### Questions worth asking at the survey

A good survey is a conversation as much as a measurement exercise. The following questions keep the discussion focused on the home and the buyer's real needs:

- How will the rail follow the stairs, and where will it stop at each level?
- Does the chosen chair have the needed weight capacity for the main user?
- Can the seat turn safely at the upper landing, and is there room for the footrest?
- What parts of the refurbished lift have been renewed, and what documentation is supplied?
- What checks are included before handover, and who handles any later adjustment?

Those questions fit naturally with the buying checks described by 2026 Buying Guide, especially when comparing refurbished equipment rather than newly made items. A refurbished stairlift can be a sensible choice when its condition, history and support are clear. The survey helps confirm that the product being considered can actually be fitted to the staircase in question.

## How the fitting appointment usually works

Once the survey has settled the design, the fitting appointment is about installing the rail, fitting the chair and checking that everything works as intended. The exact sequence varies with the property and the type of stairlift. A straight rail may be assembled from sections, while a curved rail is shaped to the measured route. The rail is fixed to the stairs or, on some systems, to the wall, depending on the equipment and the structure of the home.

Before any drilling begins, the area should be prepared. Loose items on the stairs need to be moved, and the route should be clear enough for safe access. Fitting involves work at height and fixed equipment, so it is not a casual DIY task. Any adjustment to fixings, rail alignment or powered parts belongs with a suitably qualified professional. The same applies if a fault appears later, particularly where the chair stops unexpectedly, the rail seems misaligned, or a safety function does not behave normally.




The installer will generally check that the rail runs smoothly, the chair travels without snagging, the stops work at each end, and the seat turns only where there is enough space. A folding footrest should move freely and sit securely when open. If a safety belt is fitted, it should be

easy to fasten and release while the user is seated. These checks are about daily confidence as much as mechanical function.

There may also be a short demonstration of the controls. This is the time to ask how the chair starts and stops, how to operate it from the seat, and what to do if it pauses. The buyer does not need to memorise every detail on the spot, but it helps to see the basic actions in the setting where they will be used. Clear written instructions are useful, especially for other people in the household who may need to help.

### What the reader should watch for

The best outcome is not simply a lift that runs. It is a lift that fits the staircase, suits the user and leaves the home practical to live in. A few points deserve attention during both appointments:

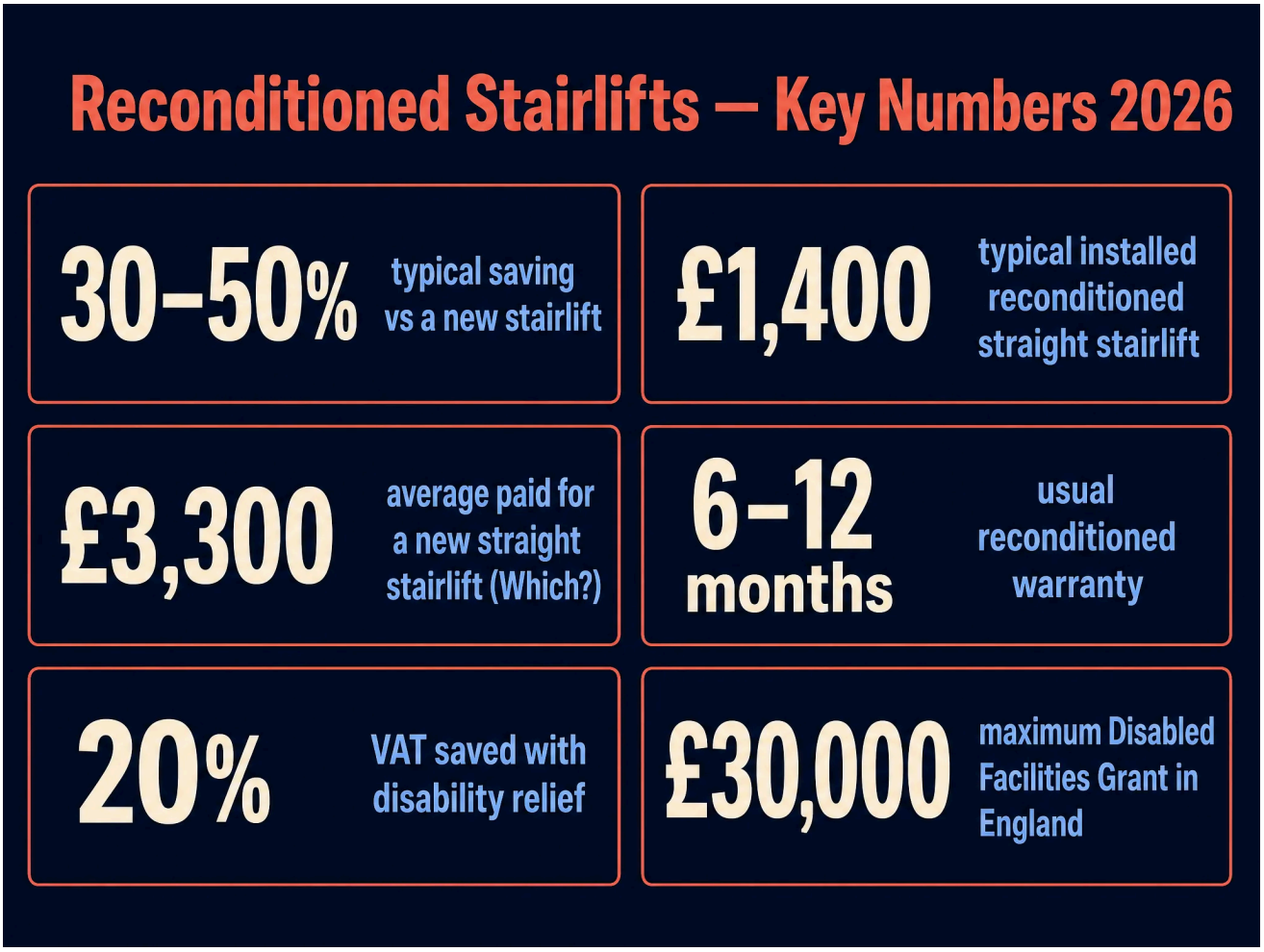
- The rail should follow a clear route without taking unnecessary space from the stairs.
- The chair should stop where transfers feel natural, not just where the rail ends.
- The seat and footrest should not clash with doors, walls or furniture.
- The refurbishment details and warranty terms should be easy to understand before acceptance.
- Any concern about noise, movement or control response should be raised before the appointment ends.

For curved refurbished stairlifts, the survey is especially important because each staircase has its own shape. A rail made for one home cannot simply be treated as a perfect match for another. The bend, rail length, landing clearance and parking position all affect comfort and safety. Refurbishment can make a pre-owned lift a reasonable option, but it does not remove the need for accurate measuring and careful fitting.

## What it means before you buy

The survey and fitting should be seen as part of the purchase decision, not as an afterthought. Before committing, it is sensible to understand what is included, what the refurbishment involves, what warranty applies and what checks are made before handover. Funding questions may also shape the choice, so it helps to raise them early rather than after a design has been agreed.

A practical way to approach the whole process is to treat the survey as a test of clarity. If the measurements, rail route, features and paperwork are explained in a way that makes sense, the buyer is in a stronger position to compare options. If key points are vague, that uncertainty tends to carry into the fitting appointment.




Installation day should end with the lift ready for ordinary use, with the main controls demonstrated and any remaining questions answered. It is reasonable to ask for adjustments if the chair does not park properly, the landing feels cramped, or a feature seems awkward. Small issues are easier to resolve at handover than after the home has returned to its normal routine.

Ultimately, a stairlift survey and fitting appointment turns a buying decision into a working arrangement. For curved refurbished stairlifts, that means matching a refurbished product to a staircase with its own turns, widths and landing points. When the measurements are sound, the features suit the user and the refurbishment details are clear, the result is far easier to judge than a specification sheet alone.