

## HOUSING AND PROPERTY SERVICE POLICY

**Area** : Asset and Property  
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**Subject** : Aids and Adaptations Policy 2019

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Please state what policies and strategies (if any) this policy is linked to (a list of policies and procedures can be found at [policies and strategies](#))

### Linked to

Asset Management Strategy  
 Allocations Policy

Version	Date	Details of amendment	Creator/ amender	Approved by	Next review due
1	11/07/19		TMs	SMT	
2					
3					
4					

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# HOUSING/PROPERTY SERVICES AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY

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## 1. Reasons for Policy

- 1.1 This policy sets out how housing and property services will manage investment in aids and adaptations within Council Housing stock.

## 2. Legislative Context

- 2.1 Local housing authorities have been under a statutory duty to provide help for major adaptations to disabled people's homes since 1990. This is usually done by a housing authority providing a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). Disabled owner-occupiers, tenants of local authorities, housing associations and private tenants, landlords and licensees can all apply to their local housing authority for a DFG to help make homes more accessible.

## 3. Objectives of the Policy

- 3.1 This policy ensures that the Council invests in its stock in a strategic way making best use of existing resources and a finite budget whilst demonstrating fairness and transparency.

## 4. Definitions

- 4.1 Major Adaptation- All other adaptation work is classed as a major adaptation. Consideration for the request will only occur once a referral has been received from Social Care. Social Care Services will use their own three tier priority scoring system to provide advice as to the urgency of the adaptation requested.
- 4.2 Minor adaptations - any work recommended by a trusted assessor and approved and supported by a qualified Occupational Therapist (OT). They are to provide access into the community or an aid for internal improvement within the property but do not require the fitting or alteration of capital equipment.
- 4.3 Occupational Therapist- Occupational therapy is a client-centred health profession concerned with promoting health and wellbeing through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life.
- 4.4 Portable Temporary Equipment- Portable or temporary appliances such as bath or shower seats, temporary ramping etc are provided by Social Care Services, not by the District Council. The District Council will advise where temporary aids or devices can be obtained for clients to purchase themselves.
- 4.5 Trusted Assessor – the trusted assessor function falls part of the Housing Support Co-ordinator role within the Lightbulb team. The co-ordinator receives support from other specialists in the team where expert advice or guidance is required or appropriate.

## 5. Responsible Party

- 5.1 The responsibility for this policy sits with Asset and Property Team Manager.

## 6. Funding

6.1 The Council provides funding each year for the provision of adaptations to enable tenants to remain in their home for as long as it is safe and reasonable to do so and give consideration for the suitability for the property to be adapted. For Council Housing tenants most of the funding comes from the Housing Service's Capital budget, with some provision for more costly works through the use of the Disabled Facilities Grant.

6.2 However, the Disabled Facilities Grant are administered by Blaby District Council on behalf of NWLDC. Whilst it is generally applicable to anyone regardless of their tenure, there are some restrictions which apply to Council Housing tenants which are considered at the time of the application.

6.3 The Disabled Facilities Grant is currently funded on a 60%:40% ratio with Central Government providing 60% of the grant and the Council topping up the rest of the grant. The main difference for council tenants is that when they apply for a DFG it is funded by NWLDC from internal funds and not from Central Government Funding administered by Blaby District Council.

6.4 The current budgets are as follows:

- Major adaptations (capital) - £295,000
- Minor adaptations (revenue) - £56,500

6.5 The indicative budget for the next three years is decreasing as follows:

Year	Capital (£)	Revenue (£)
2020/21	250,000	57,941
2021/22	200,000	59,941
2022/23	200,000	62,037

## 7. Decision Making

7.1 Decisions with regard to Aids and Adaptations will consider a number of factors including

- Suitability of property for adaptation
- Cost
- Professional recommendation
- Availability of suitable alternative accommodation

## 8. Suitability of Property for Adaptation

8.1 If the tenant's property is not considered suitable for an adaptation, the adaptation request will be declined. Reasons for refusing an adaptation request include,

- ability to adapt the property,
- the property layout/floor level,
- the potential impact the proposed adaptation could have on the ability to let the property in the future, if the adaptation works were carried out, for example if a downstairs bedroom was significantly reduced the lounge area
- the availability of suitable alternative accommodation.

- 8.2 When a proposed adaptation would require structural conversion works to be carried out to a property, we will initially assess if suitable alternative accommodation is currently or will become available within a reasonable time. The suitable alternative accommodation will either negate the need for the adaptations requested or be more suitable to be adapted for lifetime occupation. In such cases, assistance will be provided for the tenants to move by awarding the appropriate priority for their application to move and where appropriate, an offer will be made on a 'direct match' basis. We will also where appropriate, undertake some adaptations whilst the property is empty.
- 8.3 Applicants whose home is considered larger than their requirements warrant (i.e. in line with Mutual Exchange Occupancy standards), or have submitted a right to buy or transfer application, or have terminated their tenancy, will not be eligible for adaptation works. Any tenant subject to a possession order will also not be eligible unless otherwise agreed by the Head of Housing.
- 8.4 Where alternative accommodation is being considered, the likely impact of moving to a new house should be assessed in relation to the customer's personal circumstances including their current health and access to support networks and professional services, to ensure that the process of moving will not have a serious adverse effect upon their health.
- 8.5 If a tenant applies to move from a fully adapted house the council will expect them to reapply to Social Services for any adaptation. The new property would also be assessed as per the criteria above to ensure it can be a 'lifetime home' for the tenant.
- 8.6 When an adapted property becomes empty every effort will be made to relet the property to someone who requires the adaptation as part of their living arrangements. Where there is no one who requires the adaptations, the property will be allocated to a household through the normal allocations process.
- 8.7 Level access showers will not be fitted in any bathroom which is on the first floor or above.

## 9. Optional Adaptations during Home Improvement Programme

- 9.1 As part of the Home Improvement Programme we will provide some optional adaptations to households who feel they would benefit from them. For example, when replacing a bathroom in a bungalow or ground floor flat we will on request replace a bath with a Level Access Shower. When rewiring properties, we will provide wiring for a shower in the main bathroom and will give tenants the option of choosing level taps as part of any sanitary product upgrades.

## 10. Equality and Diversity

- 10.1 We aim to ensure that our policies and procedures are fair and transparent; and that we work towards achieving balanced and sustainable communities in accordance with our equality and diversity goals. This policy has been subject to the Council's EIA screening matrix which identified the policy has no negative impact on any protected group.

## 11. Implementation and Monitoring

- 11.1 The Strategic Director of Housing and Customer Services is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy.

## 12. KPIs

- 12.1 The KPIs are detailed in the service standards section below.

## 13. Service Standards

- 13.1 The following service standards apply to the Aids and Adaptations service

KPI 1 – Customer Satisfaction – All residents surveyed by NWLDC are satisfied with the service provided – Target 95%

KPI 2 – Quality Assurance Checks – Quality checks are carried out in accordance with the NWL specification and industry standards that are deemed to be acceptable – Target 0 Defects

KPI 3 – H&S – The contractor will report to the council the number of accidents and incidents reportable to the HSE. Target – 0 Incidents

KPI 4 – Completions – The contractor will report to the council the number of work orders, expressed as a percentage of all work orders submitted. – Target 95%

## 14. Right to Review

- 14.1 The application is based on the professional opinion of the trusted assessor or OT. The date when the work can be carried out is not subject to an appeal but due to budget availability and level of applications received.
- 14.2 If a tenant believes that the procedure has not been properly applied in reaching the final decision, they may appeal in writing and ask for the decision to be reconsidered.
- 14.3 Any appeal received will be reviewed by the Asset and Property Team Manager.
- 14.4 All appeals will be acknowledged in 2 working days and a full response outlining the Appeals decision will be aimed to be completed within 20 working days. If there are any other complaints in relation to the adaptation service, these will be dealt with in line with the Corporate Complaints Procedure

## Appendix One - Examples of Adaptations

The following are examples of minor adaptations:

- Lever taps
- Visual smoke detectors
- Visual door bells
- Half steps
- Small Ramps
- Key clamp railings
- Path Improvement (Not hardstanding)/concrete steps
- Access ramps
- Internal stair lifts

The following are examples of major adaptations:

- Level access showers
- Major structural conversions
- Stair lifts/ through floor lifts
- Internal Stair Lifts
- Large Access Ramps