



**AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS
POLICY**

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1.0 Scope

This document sets out Broxtowe Borough Council's approach to the provision of aids and adaptations to Council owned accommodation. It covers both General Needs and Independent Living tenancies. Homeowners, leaseholders and private sector tenants are not included within the scope of this policy because they are eligible to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant from the Council if they require financial assistance. If a tenant wishes to install their own adaptation, this is covered by the Alterations and Improvement Policy.

2.0 Purpose

Broxtowe Borough Council is committed to ensuring that council tenants and their immediate families who have a disability can, as far as possible, continue to live safely and independently and carry out essential day to day activities. The needs of the individual need to be balanced with effective use of limited Council stock.

This policy statement accords with two of the Councils' corporate priorities which are:

"A good quality home for everyone."

and

"Support people to live well"

3.0 Aims and Objectives

The policy aims and objectives are to:

- Provide a high quality aids and adaptations service to enable disabled tenants and their immediate families to live safely and independently in their own home.
- Provide an efficient adaptations service making best use of the council housing stock, and the budget available.
- Set out a framework to deal effectively and consistently with request for aids and adaptations.
- Ensure that value for money is a key consideration in delivering new adaptations and retaining existing adaptations.
- Assist those in need of adaptations to make informed choices about their housing options, facilitating transfers to more appropriate accommodation where required.
- Raise awareness of the availability of the aids and adaptations service.

4.0 Regulatory Code and Legal Framework

The Council has to operate within the framework created by various pieces of legislation. These include:

- Housing Act 1985
- Care Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

5.0 Policy

5.1 Definition of an adaptation

An adaptation is a change made to a property to make it more accessible and safer for a disabled person. These are defined as minor or major.

5.2 Minor adaptation

Minor adaptations involve small scale, usually non-structural, alterations or additions to a property. Examples of this type of work include:

- Lever operated taps
- Hand rails
- Grab-rails
- Additional external lighting
- Flashing fire alarms• Minor internal alterations
- Minor kitchen or bathroom works
- Minor stepped access alterations

5.3 Major adaptation

Major adaptations involve larger schemes of works and often involve structural alterations. Types of major adaptations include:

- Installation of ramps or widening doorways
- Installation of improved lighting or adapting a room specifically to make it safer for a disabled person
- Improvements to access facilities such as a stair lift
- Improvements to the facilities such as replacing a bath with a level access shower
- Over-bath showers
- An extension to the property to provide ground floor bedroom or showering facilities

5.4 Request for an adaptation

The Council will normally only consider a request for aids and adaptations if the disabled person is the person(s) named in the tenancy or their dependent under the age of 18.

A person is regarded as disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities. 'Substantial' is defined as more than minor or trivial, 'Long-term' means 12 months or more.

For minor adaptations the tenant may make a self-referral to the Aids and Adaptations Officer. For major adaptations, the Occupational Therapy Service at Nottinghamshire County Council will assess the requirements and needs of the tenant, using the recognised Adult Social Care and Health eligibility criteria and associated guidance and provide a recommendation to the Council. Alternatively, for less complex major adaptation requests, the Aids and Adaptations Officer may assess the requirements and needs of the tenant through the Trusted Assessor process.

Referrals received by a hospital Occupational Therapist, resulting from a full property assessment as part of discharge planning, may be considered by the Council, but the Council will reserve the right to refer the request directly to an appropriate agency for further assessment.

Where the Council receives a request directly through an organisation representing a person with a specific disability / sensory impairment to supply and fit specialist equipment, the Council will decide if the works can proceed in accordance with the provisions of this policy. Such organisations include the Deaf and Visual Impairment Team from Nottinghamshire County Council.

The Council will reserve the right in all cases to refer a request to the Occupational Therapy Service at Nottinghamshire County Council for further assessment.

5.5 Approval of minor adaptations

Minor aids and adaptation under the cost of £1000 will be approved by the Aids and Adaptations Officer and will be completed in chronological order from the date the referral is received unless the Occupational Therapy Service request the referral be treated as a priority or approval is given by the Capital Works Manager.

5.6 Approval of major adaptations

The following will be considered when approving major adaptations works:

- Occupational Therapist or Trusted Assessor report and advice
- Whether the adaptations requested are reasonable and practicable, having regard to the age and character of the property
- The cost of the adaptations necessary to the current property,
- The likely medical prognosis and the long-term usability of the proposed adaptation
- Property type and demand
- Any under-occupation or over-occupation
- The likely availability of more appropriate alternative accommodation
- The needs of the tenant, and any personal factors that the tenant puts forward as demonstrating a need to remain in their existing accommodation
- The availability of the tenant's existing support network and carers

Approval of major adaptations will be made on the condition that:

- An Occupational Therapist or, if applicable, the Aids and Adaptations Officer through the Trusted Assessor procedure completes an Assessment of Need

which outlines clear recommendations that the work is necessary to sustain independent living;

- An assessment is carried out with the tenant to check whether a move to a more suitable property may resolve the need for adaptations and present a better long-term solution to their circumstances (see section 5.9); and
- The proposed works comply with all Planning Permission and Building Regulation requirements.

The decision for works up to £30,000 will be made by the Capital Works Manager (or nominated deputy).

In the following circumstances approval may be withheld and the Capital Works Manager will consult with the Housing Operations Manager (or nominated deputy) before making a decision:

- In a family dwelling where under or over occupation exists.
- Where there is a requirement to extend to provide an additional bedroom or living room or wetroom and suitable alternative accommodation exists within the near locality or alternative area where the tenant wishes to live.
- Where a level access shower or wetroom is required in an under occupied family dwelling.
- Where access ramps would adversely affect the amenity of the area.
- Where the practicalities of carrying out adaptations to properties with narrow doors, stairways and passages make wheelchair use in and around the dwelling difficult.

This is not an exhaustive list and the Capital Works Manager may consult with the Housing Operations Manager for any works if appropriate.

In the above circumstances the Council will look at options in its housing stock that may be more appropriate in order to offer value for money and release under occupied properties (See section 5.9). However, individual circumstances or needs will be taken into consideration and the Council may seek further evidence of personal factors or professional advice (i.e. from Occupational Therapy, Health or Social care professionals) to make an informed decision.

Works over £30,000 must be discussed by the Head of Asset Management and Development with the Housing Portfolio Holder and approved by Cabinet.

In most circumstances work will be completed in chronological order from the date the referral is received unless the Occupational Therapy Service request the referral be treated as a priority or in exceptional circumstances the Capital Works Manager may decide to prioritise a request.

5.7 Communal Areas

Where a request for an adaptation is received for a communal/ shared access area the process for approvals described in section 5.6 will be followed, however the Housing Operations Manager (or nominated deputy). Each request will be assessed

on an individual basis and an assessment will be made on the impact for other users of the shared/ communal area. It may be necessary to consult with other users before a decision is made. Communal adaptations will be funded through the relevant Housing budget.

5.8 Works that will not be approved

The Council will not adapt a property when:

- A tenancy does not exist
- The tenant is seeking to move or transfer on the grounds the property is not suitable for their needs or they wish to move to another area of the borough or to another local authority area.
- Where the Council is seeking possession of a property because of a breach of tenancy conditions, or where a current Right to Buy application has been made.

The Council will not fund non-fixed equipment which are normally provided by the Social Care Authority, including:

- Powered bath-hoists
- Commode chairs
- Specialist toilet seats
- Specialist furniture

Induction loops5.9 Alternative Solutions

Where a request for adaptations has been refused (see section 5.6) and if it is considered by the Council that a tenant's needs would be best met through a move to a more suitable property, a priority move will be sought, in accordance with the Council's Allocations Policy.

Where a decision is made that a tenant's needs can be best met through a move to a more suitable property, the Aids and Adaptations Officer will inform the Allocations Team of a tenant's housing needs and will provide details to support their housing application.

Where a relocation to a more suitable property proceeds, the Council may support the tenant with the cost of moving. The amount offered will depend upon individual circumstances up to a maximum of £1,000. At least three quotations for each move related service or cost will be required and the suppliers will be paid direct by the Council, funded from the Aids and Adaptations budget. Funding may only be given to cover actual costs.

5.10 Appeals

If a tenant wishes to appeal against any decision taken regarding their requested adaptation they must do so within 28 days of the date of the decision letter.

The appeal must be made in writing to the Head of Asset Management and Development and outline the reason that the tenant disagrees with the decision that has been made and provide any supporting documentation. The Head of Asset

Management and Development will acknowledge receipt of the appeal letter within 5 working days. The appeal will be considered by the Head of Asset Management and Development in consultation with officers and relevant health and social care professionals and a response will be provided within 10 working days, or where that cannot be achieved within 20 working days with advise given to tenant of delay. A copy of the appeals procedure will be provided to the tenant with their application decision.

Should a tenant remain dissatisfied, they can access the Council's Corporate Complaints Policy at www.broxtowe.gov.uk

5.11 Timescales for works

The Aids and Adaptations Officer will acknowledge to the tenant the receipt of the referral, and the details of the works requested within 5 working days of receipt of the referral. In addition, the tenant will be given an indication of the timescale in which it is anticipated the works will start and be completed, the name of the contractor and contact telephone numbers for the contractors and Aids and Adaptations Officer.

Target times for completion of works will vary according to the type of adaptation required. The Council aims to carry out specific types of adaptations following receipt of a referral within the following timescales:

- Minor adaptations: 3 weeks
- Major adaptations, not requiring architect or planning permission: 12 weeks
- Extensive adaptations such as extensions: 26 weeks (following planning approval and successful tender of contract)

5.12 Maintenance of adaptations

The Council will meet the costs of all routine repairs and maintenance to any equipment it supplies through this policy. A programme will be in place to undertake annual servicing and maintenance of stair lifts and lifting equipment. For most equipment, a five year extended warranty will be purchased at the time of install, funded by the aids and adaptations budget. Outside of warranty, the maintenance and repair will be managed and funded by the housing repairs team. Warranties longer than five years may be purchased if they are deemed cost effective by the Housing Repairs Manager. Such warranties will be funded by housing repairs.

The Council will maintain an up to date records of all major adaptations installed. If equipment is wilfully damaged by the tenant, members of their household or anyone else visiting the property, the Council will recharge the tenant for any repairs required.

5.13 Transfers following adaptations

Following a major adaptation, the Council would normally expect the tenant to remain in the property for a minimum of five years. However, there may be exceptions where the individual's needs have changed and the Council agree a move is necessary. The application to join Homesearch must be approved by the

Head of Housing and if any adaptations are required at the new property, these must be approved in accordance with section 5.6 of this policy.

5.14 Letting adapted properties

The Council will identify details of any major adaptations for all properties that become vacant and will allocate properties to make the most appropriate use of any existing adaptation. Adapted properties will be allocated through the Council's choice based lettings scheme, and applicants that require the adaptations will be prioritised in accordance with the Allocations Policy. This is particularly important for properties with significant adaptations, such as those that have been extended to provide ground floor showering and or bedroom facilities, or where an external or through floor lift have been installed.

5.15 Recycling and removal of adaptations

Where possible, equipment that has been installed as part of an adaptation will be reused by re-letting a property to an applicant that requires the adaptation. If this is not possible, the repairs team in collaboration with the Capital Works team will consider removing adaptations from locations where they are no longer required and storing for re-use. The cost of the equipment, the expected lifespan and availability of storage facilities will be considered. Examples of equipment that may be removed and recycled include:

- Stair lifts
- Hoists
- Through floor lifts
- Wash dry toilets

Where adaptations have been carried out to a property designated for elderly or disabled people, these will not normally be reversed e.g. where a bath has been replaced with a level access shower.

Where General Needs accommodation has been adapted, the Council will seek to find a suitable applicant using the Council's approved Allocations Policy, who will benefit from such adaptations (see section 5.14). Where a new tenant who is not disabled accepts an offer to move into an adapted property, adaptations such as level access showers will not usually be removed. If a bath is installed instead of a level access shower, the bath should be installed over the shower area if possible to allow for future conversion back to a level access shower.

Removal of adaptations are not funded by the aids and adaptations budget.

6.0 Related Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- Aids and Adaptations Process Map
- Major Adaptations Decision Form and Guidance
- Allocations Policy
- Mobility Scooter Procedure

7.0 Complaints, Comments and Compliments

The Aids and Adaptation Policy will aim to bring consistency to the management of adaptations within Council properties. However, if a tenant feels they have cause to complain, procedures are in place to put things right as quickly as possible.

- If a tenant wishes to register a complaint they are encouraged, in the first instance, to contact the Aids and Adaptations Officer directly. The Aids and Adaptations Officer will attempt to resolve the situation informally.
- If the tenant remains dissatisfied they can register their complaint through the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. This is available at www.broxtowe.gov.uk
- The Council will send a customer satisfaction survey to all of the tenants that have accessed the adaptations service.
- All comments and compliments will be noted and acknowledged as appropriate.
- The appeals process for adaptation request approvals is detailed in section 5.10.

8.0 Performance and Budget Monitoring

The Aids and Adaptations budget is managed within the Deputy Chief Executive's Directorate reporting to and guided by the Head of Asset Management and Development.

The following information will be recorded by the Aids and Adaptations Officer:

- Number of adaptations installed, on the basis of minor and major
- Number and type of adaptations rejected and reasons
- Percentage of adaptations completed within target (minor and major adaptations, including extensive works - that is work that may require Planning and/or Building Control consent)

Details of spend and budget commitment will be reported to the Head of Asset Management and Development and the Head of Housing by the Capital Works Manager. Any request for budget increases will be made by the Head of Asset Management and Development to the appropriate committee.

The Council will aim that year on year, adequate resources are provided to meet the adaptation needs of its tenants and to make the best use of any adapted properties that become vacant.

9.0 Review

The policy will be reviewed every three years, unless there is a change to legislation or guidance which requires an earlier review. Any major amendment to this policy will be brought to Cabinet for approval. Minor amendments will be undertaken by the Head of Asset Management and Development in consultation with the Head of Housing and Housing Portfolio Holder.

10.0 Document History and Approval

Date	Version	Committee Name
30 th March 2017	1.0	Housing Committee
14 th March 2023	2.0	Cabinet