

Front and back pages to be added and uploaded to SKDC website after Cabinet approval.

1. Scope of Policy

The Regulator for Social Housing sets out the requirement in the Safety and Quality Standard that registered providers must assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services.

This policy sets out the approach that the Council will take in relation to requests for aids and adaptations.

This policy applies to Council tenants or household members who are named on the tenancy agreement or a member of the immediate family who is permanently resident in the household. It does not apply to leaseholders, free holders, shared owners, intermediate or market rent properties.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Assist tenants, where possible, to remain in their homes and communities through the provision of aids and adaptations.
- Ensure tenants applying for aids and adaptations are treated in fair way.
- Ensure that the Council makes the best use of existing housing stock.
- Comply with legal and regulatory requirements.

2. Policy Statement

The Council is committed to delivering a range of services to best meet the needs of tenants, legal and regulatory requirements and to ensure that homes and communal facilities are safe and well maintained.

If a tenant has problems getting around their home, the Council may be able to provide adaptations which would make it easier for them.

3. Legislation Requirements

Social landlords must adhere to the following legislation and standards:

- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- Care Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995

The Council will liaise with Social Services and consult best practice to ensure that this policy is kept in line with current requirements and takes account of any legislative changes.

4. Aids and Adaptations Service

To receive aids and adaptations a tenant must meet the disability criteria as set out within the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Aids and adaptations are provided to improve access to the home, improve mobility or help with daily living.

An aid is a piece of equipment which is portable and not permanently fixed to your home. Aids are provided by Occupational Health Services and are not provided by the Council.

Adaptations are permanently fixed works carried out by the Council and are categorised as:

- Minor Adaptations – costing up to £1,000.
- Major Adaptations – costing over £1,000.

See APPENDIX A – Examples of Minor and Major Adaptations

The Council's Housing Revenue Account will fund the provision of adaptations in Council homes. Budgets are limited each year and therefore adaptations will be carried out on a first come first served basis. The maximum spend on one project under this policy is £30,000.

It is recognised that a small number of exceptional cases fall outside of this limit, exceptional cases will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Head of Service (Technical Services) and the Director of Housing and Projects.

Occupational Therapists are health care professionals and will carry out an assessment of a tenant's need and recommend aids and adaptations in a tenant's home.

We are not responsible for installing or maintaining aids and adaptations where an application for right to buy is active.

Requests for adaptations in communal areas are considered on a case-by-case basis, and all affected tenants will be considered.

5. Minor Adaptations

We will only consider carrying out minor adaptations that have been recommended by Occupational Therapy Services, hospital or clinical doctors, GPs, or other medical professionals.

Minor adaptations shall be reviewed and a decision made to approve or decline the works within 5 working days of receiving the request.

Minor adaptations orders will be placed within 5 working days of a decision with a maximum completion date for works of 20 working days allowed.

Where a rapid response minor adaptations is required to facilitate a hospital discharge, we aim to complete these within 24 hours of approving and raising an order.

6. Major Adaptations

We will only consider carrying out major adaptations that have been recommended by Occupational Therapy Services from Lincolnshire County Council.

Major adaptations are provided in line with the purposes set out in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 for disabled facilities grants and may include:

- help facilitate access to the home or garden
- making a premises safe
- access to the principal family room
- access to the room for sleeping
- access to the toilet
- access to bath or shower
- access to the wash basin
- the preparation of food and cooking
- better heating
- control of power, light and heat
- caring for those who normally reside at that property
- adaptations to the common parts of buildings containing flats.

Subject to budget provision all major adaptations will be reviewed and a decision made to approve or decline the works within 10 days of receiving an Occupational Therapy Services recommendation.

Major adaptations orders will be placed within 5 working days of a decision to approve or decline the work with a maximum completion date for works of 60 working days allowed.

For extensions or major conversions, specific target timeframes will not be set due to the varying amount of work required for each case.

7. Internal Transfers

As an alternative or if it is confirmed that the property is not suitable to be adapted for major adaptations, a tenant can apply for an internal transfer to a more suitable property.

At the Council's discretion, it may choose to move a tenant to more suitable property which better meets their needs rather than adapting the current home. The Technical Services team will work with the Housing team to facilitate this and keep the tenant updated.

If a tenant chose to move away from a property which has already been fully adapted, no further adaptations will be carried out at the new property.

8. Asset Data Management and Planned Works Programmes

The Council maintains accurate and up to date assets management database with all relevant information about major aids and adaptations. These details are available to inform the management of allocations and lettings, and the maintenance of the adaptations itself including renewals dates.

When planning improvement programmes, the Council will consider the incorporation of adaptations as part of works to reduce the pressure on aids adaptations budgets, such as installing level access bathrooms in bungalows and ground floor flats.

9. Post Checks and Repairs

The Council aims to carry out post checks to 10% of all completed minor adaptations and 100% post checks to major adaptations, where a post check is required and access restricted, we may contact the tenant so that any defects

can be reported. The responsible officer will log any defects identified by the tenant or during the post check process and monitor that these are completed.

10. Retaining Adaptations

The Council will retain minor and major adaptations in properties when property is vacated and becomes void. The Council will only remove adaptations if they are beyond economic repair.

11. Declining Requests for Adaptations

The Council may decline requests for adaptations if this is not an effective use of resources or does not provide value for money for example:

- Level access showers to houses and flats above ground floor which cannot be accessed by a vertical lift.
- Extensions or major conversions if the Council can offer alternative accommodation.
- Adaptations that will adversely affect the letting of the property in future.
- Adaptations which will place other tenants at risk or impede access for others.
- Adaptations to facilitate the use of tenant bought mobility scooters or mobility aids.
- Ovens, hobs or white goods.
- Off Street Parking/Hardstanding for vehicles

The Council will decline adaptations where it is not physically possible to alter the property in the requested way, or the adaptation would involve major structural works or may create health and safety risks.

The Council will assess each case individually before deciding to approve or decline the requested adaptations. The Council will work with Occupational Therapy Services to consider combined adaptations where appropriate and decisions will be linked to assessed needs and wellbeing outcomes.

The Council will write to the tenant to confirm the decision outcome and provide details of how the tenant can appeal the decision if required.

Where requested adaptations are declined, the Council will work with the tenant, Occupational Therapy Services and Housing Management to find more suitable accommodation. An Occupational Therapist may provide a rehousing report to support this process.

If a tenant wishes to carry out their own adaptations to a property they must obtain permission in accordance with the Council's permissions policy.

We do not carry out temporary aids and adaptations.

12. Equality and Diversity

The Council is committed to providing an equal opportunity to the service for all tenants. Any action taken under this policy will comply with current equalities legislation.

The Council's staff and contractors will operate in such a way to ensure that they meet the needs of individual residents and to ensure that they do not discriminate on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

13. Complaints

The Council aims to meet the needs of tenants by providing an excellent service. However, it is acknowledged that occasionally things go wrong, and tenants may wish to complain. Should the need arise to make a complaint, we will refer to our complaints policy and procedures.

14. Monitoring and Review

Performance will be monitored using a suite of key performance indicators and reported through to respective committees, senior management teams and scrutiny panels to identify areas for review and improvement. The following key performance indicators will be reported:

- Number of minor and major adaptations undertaken each year.
- Timescales to complete adaptations.
- Tenant satisfaction.
- Quality of works.

Members of the Council will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and recommend policy changes to improve service delivery and customer experience.

This policy is reviewed every 3 years or on the introduction of new legislation or best practice. This policy will remain valid for use until a new version is available.

15. Associated Documents

List of documents – associated policies, procedures and publications:

- Asset Management Strategy
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Customer Feedback Policy
- Allocations Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

16. Where this Policy can be Found

This policy will be made available on our website.

APPENDIX A – Examples of Minor and Major Adaptations

Minor adaptations under £1,000 may include but are not limited to the following:

- internal doors threshold ramps
- level taps
- grab rails
- handrails
- stair rails
- moving door handles
- lowering or repositioning light switches and power sockets
- steps
- small ramps or removal ramps
- flashing or amplified doorbells
- door and wall protectors

Major adaptations over £1,000 may include but are not limited to the following:

- level access showers
- large permanent ramps
- door widening
- stair lifts
- kitchen refurbishment with lower-level units
- through floor lifts
- swing doors or powered doors
- extensions or major conversions

APPENDIX B – Adaptations Process

