

Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants with Disabilities and Long-term Health Conditions

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. This policy outlines how the council will fulfil its responsibility to provide adaptations for its council tenants. It specifically applies to council-owned properties and does not cover private sector housing or social housing managed by other organisations. The primary goal of this policy is to help Nottingham City Council tenants with disabilities or long-term health issues to remain in their homes and carry out essential daily activities independently.
- 1.2. Throughout this policy 'Adaptations' includes the equipment, installation of equipment and / or the modification to a property to enhance a tenant's independence in the home.
- 1.3. This policy outlines Nottingham City Council's approach to providing adaptations for Council housing tenants, guided by the following principles:
 - **Tenant-centred Approach:** Prioritise tenant needs and preferences in all adaptation decisions, ensuring a respectful, sensitive, and supportive approach.
 - **Vulnerability:** Recognise and accommodate the diversity and inclusion of tenants, including physical, cultural, and linguistic and other needs as identified under the NCCHS Vulnerability policy.
 - **Reasonable Adjustments:** Consideration given for adaptation and installation of specialist equipment on how to balance the needs of tenants and household by most appropriate and reasonable use of NCCHS stock and stock of other local providers
 - **Regulatory Compliance:** Ensure evidence of compliance with all relevant housing and health regulations, including accessibility standards and safety requirements.
 - **Transparency and Accountability:** Provide clear, consistent communication about the adaptation process, timelines, and responsibilities, and maintain rigorous record-keeping. Demonstrate continuous improvement and financial viability to provide assurance that services provide value for money and appropriate use of resources.
- 1.4. Any reference in this policy to 'the Council' 'organisation' 'we' 'our' and 'us' refers to Nottingham City Council, unless otherwise stated.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy covers all adaptations and related equipment that are funded through the council's Housing Revenue Account.
- 2.2. This policy sets out:
 - Who is eligible
 - What works are eligible
 - Arrangements for the delivery of adaptations and ongoing maintenance including tenants' responsibilities
 - How the works and any ongoing maintenance are funded.
- 2.3. This policy is developed alongside other Council policies and strategies, and is aligned with the Strategic Council Plan, the Housing Services Divisional Business Plan, The Housing Strategy and the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

3. Corporate Context

- 3.1. The 2021 census indicates that 25.1% of Nottingham households include at least one person with a disability as defined under the Equalities Act. Social housing in Nottingham is the tenure with the highest proportion of residents that reported to be disabled. The proportions for the different tenures are as follows; Registered Providers 41.9%, NCC HRA rented 41.4%, owner occupiers 21.0% and private renters 16.8%.
- 3.2. Spend on falls and accidents in the home is proving a challenge for local authorities across the country. Preventative initiatives are recognised as an effective way to reduce the demand on council and NHS budgets for services that respond to falls and accidents.
- 3.3. The Strategic Council Plan 2024 – 2027's section on 'Living Well in our Communities' includes a commitment to "Provide access to occupational therapy, equipment and adaptations enhancing preventative opportunities and promoting independence to allow people to continue to live in their own home". This policy supports this by outlining our approach for council tenants to access these services.
- 3.4. The Council's Housing Strategy (2024 – 2028) notes the importance of enabling people to retain their independence, health, and wellbeing and makes a commitment to "Improve access to and take-up of occupational therapy, equipment and adaptations to allow people to continue to live in their own homes."
- 3.5. This policy applies in conjunction with relevant council policies, see Repair, Maintenance and Investment Strategies and Policies List for further detail.

4. **Legislative Basis**

- 4.1. This policy, and the way in which services are delivered, comply with the requirements of the applicable standards and legislation, see Repair, maintenance and investment Legislative List for further detail.

5. **Definitions / Glossary**

- 5.1. The following terms are used throughout this policy:

- **Adaptations** - adaptations make a permanent or semi-permanent change to a property, at a minimum they require 'fixing' to a property.
 - **Major Adaptation** – Larger-scale modifications, such as level-access showers, stairlifts, and ramps and property extensions.
 - **Minor Adaptation** – Simple installations, such as handrails, grab bars, or lever taps.
- **Aids** – equipment or devices that are usually removable or portable such as such as shower stools, and toilet seat risers.
- **Specification** – the specification is detailed description of what equipment and adaptations are needed how they should be installed.
- **Specialist equipment** – includes items such as stairlifts and often require a degree of adaptation and installation

6. **Policy**

- 6.1. Eligibility

All council tenants experiencing difficulties with mobility, physical disabilities, age-related or mental wellbeing limitations are eligible for consideration for the adaptations covered by this policy.

6.2. Delivery of adaptations

- 6.2.1. Referrals can be initiated by healthcare professionals, social workers, housing management or property staff or tenants themselves.
- 6.2.2. The works themselves must be deemed to be necessary and appropriate for the tenant and are reasonable and practicable to be carried out in the property. Any approved works will be delivered in line with agreed procedures.
- 6.2.3. Where a property is considered unsuitable for the required scope of adaptations necessary or works financially unviable to demonstrate best value for the council different options including alternative accommodation could be consider as a reasonable adjustment and a solution to identified needs.
- 6.2.4. Recommendations are then prioritised and processed in line with the Adaptations and Renewal Agency procedural doc.
- 6.2.5. Where adaptations are made to properties owned by the Council, Housing Services will take responsibility to maintain and replace in line with policy and procedures.

6.3. Appealing a decision

- 6.3.1. Decisions can be appealed in line with Nottingham City Council Housing Services' Complaint Policy¹.

6.4. Re-letting of adapted property

When an adapted property becomes available for re-letting, Housing Services will prioritise using it for a household that can benefit from the existing adaptations. This will be achieved through various approaches, including identifying existing tenants on the waiting list for such a property, considering direct referrals from social care teams, and advertising the property on Nottingham HomeLink with details of the adaptations and a preference for applicants with a medical need.

7. **Responsibilities**

- 7.1. The referral and assessment service for adaptations is provided by the Adult Social Care directorate through the Occupational Therapy service and the Adaptations and Renewal Agency.
- 7.2. The delivery of adaptations is generally provided by the Housing Services directorate, in some circumstances the Adaptations and Renewal Agency will commission an external provider and oversee the contract management for this service.
- 7.3. Tenant responsibilities are outlined in the tenancy agreement.

8. **Engagement and feedback**

¹ <https://www.ncchousing.org.uk/complaints>

- 8.1. We capture feedback from tenants in a variety of ways and use this to help shape our services, see Delivering adaptations to council owned homes procedural document and Adaptations and Renewal Agency procedural document for further detail.
- 8.2. Regular consultations with tenants and disability advocacy groups to identify potential improvements in service delivery and ensure culturally sensitive adaptations.

9. Procedures

- 9.1. Adaptations and Renewal Agency procedural document (under development).
- 9.2. Delivering adaptations to council owned homes procedural document (under development)
- 9.3. Housing Services Aids and Adaptations 2024 process map

10. Monitoring and Review

- 10.1. This policy will be reviewed to comply with any changes to legislation or good practice which are relevant, and no less than every three years.
- 10.2. The Adaptations service to tenants is monitored and reviewed in line with NCC's performance management framework and contract management framework.
- 10.3. Scheduled and ad-hoc audits of the service to ensure adaptations meet regulatory standards and address potential risks.

11. Appendices

- 11.1. Equalities Impact Assessment
- 11.2. Repair, Maintenance and Investment Strategies and Policies List
- 11.3. Repair, Maintenance and Investment Legislative List