

Cheshire West and Chester Council
Housing Management

Adaptations Policy

1 MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Approval Date – V2.1	TBA
Next Review Date	TBA
Responsible Service Area	Strategic Housing and Commissioning
Responsible Director	Director Economy, Housing & Policy

Aim of Policy

This policy applies to all housing management services delivered on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) Council.

ForHousing, part of the ForViva Group, delivers housing management services on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester across their housing stock in the borough. The policy sets out our approach to carrying out adaptations and aims to support tenants ensuring they experience a good quality of life within their homes. The policy and associated service will strike a balance between continuously improving levels of provision and tenant service, making best use of housing stock and the need to achieve value for money.

The Equality Act 2010 states that “...landlords will be obliged to make certain reasonable adjustments if requested by the tenant. Reasonable adjustments do not include the removal or alteration of a physical feature but do include providing auxiliary aids or services, changing practices, policies and procedures and/or changing the term of the letting.”

For the purpose of this policy, an adaptation is an alteration or addition to any aspect of a property which is provided in order to make it easier or safer for use by an older person or a disabled person. This may be the tenant or a member of their family or household and throughout this policy references to the tenant will include their family or household. The assessment of the specific needs of the tenant and recommendations of what adaptation work is required would usually result from an assessment from an Occupational Therapist.

Policy

We will comply with legislative and regulatory requirements and work within the spirit of the Homes and Communities Agency guide: “Minor Adaptations without Delay”.

As far as practicably possible, we will support tenants and enable them to continue to live independently within their home and community, ensuring that their home remains safe and convenient to use, whilst ensuring efficient management of resources.

We will work within the framework of the Council’s Asset Management Strategy, having regard to investment and maintaining the long term sustainability of the housing stock.

We will develop a register of adapted properties so that, where possible, re-lets can be matched with tenants’ individual needs.

We will make the best use of the housing stock in an attempt to ensure that disabled tenants are enabled to access and live in housing that is appropriate to their needs.

Maintenance of adaptations

Once adaptations have been installed, we will maintain and repair these through the repairs and maintenance service to ensure they remain effective and in good working order. These works will be raised and delivered in accordance with the appropriate standard repair timescales. Appliances provided at time of initial works will not be maintained by us, i.e. a cooker installed at the time of a rise and fall kitchen will be the responsibility of the tenant.

Assessment of adaptation requests

The assessment of an individual’s need for adaptations remains the statutory duty of the local authority through its Community Occupational Therapy service.

Following an adaptation request by a tenant, where an Occupational Therapist assessment is considered to be necessary, we will arrange for an Occupational Therapist to visit, discuss individual needs and assess whether or not adaptation works may be necessary and appropriate to meet the long term needs of the individual.

Following an adaptation request by a tenant, where an Occupational Therapist assessment is not considered to be necessary, we will visit and assess the works that may be required. This visit will take place within 10 working days from request.

The CW&C Housing Assistance Policy 2024 sets out the eligibility criteria for Disabled Facilities Grants assistance and these are adopted here as follows:

Works

- Must be necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled person
- Must be reasonable and practicable to carry out given the age and condition of the dwelling
- Must be the most cost-effective option and achieve best value for money
- Works to facilitate access and enable independent living:
 - o Facilitate access to the home and garden
 - o Making the premises safer
 - o Access to the principal family room and bedroom
 - o Access to a toilet, wash hand basin, bath and/or shower
 - o Facilitate the preparation and cooking of food
 - o Better or more appropriate heating
 - o Control of power, light and heat
- An adaptation to facilitate hospital discharge
- An adaptation required to avoid risk of carer breakdown
- An adaptation required urgently due to life-limiting illness or rapid deterioration

Delivery

The Occupational Therapist will include on their referral a priority rating and we will use this to inform our delivery programme.

Where we have assessed the adaptation works or following an Occupational Therapist assessment, if the works are estimated to be less than £1,000 in value (Low Cost/Minor Adaptations); the works will be completed in line with the day to day repairs timescales;

- Priority 1 (emergency) 1 day
- Priority 2 (urgent) 3 days
- All others (routine) 20 days

Where, following an Occupational Therapist assessment, any necessary works are estimated to be more than £1,000 (Major Adaptations), the works will be completed within a maximum of 6 months, from the date of the receipt of the OT assessment,, excluding property extensions.

Refusal of Adaptation Requests

We are unlikely to invest in the provision of adaptations where the benefit achieved for the resident is short term; it is not practicable to do so. Such circumstances may include:

- Where the tenant is actively seeking rehousing;
- Where the tenancy is less than 12 months old;
- When the adaptation requested is not structurally practicable;

- Where a property is under-occupied or over crowded and major adaptations are requested;
- Where a request is made to provide a level access shower above ground floor level. Future letability becomes an issue as many disabled people with mobility problems who could benefit from such a shower may have problems negotiating stairs;
- Where provision is requested for use of a motorised scooter;
- We would normally only provide adaptations to an individual's primary place of residence;
- Applications for property extensions will, in most cases, be refused and suitable alternative accommodation will be sought. If it has not been possible to relocate the tenant, a review of the case will take place by Asset Management (ForHousing HMC)
- Discretion will be exercised by Asset Management (ForHousing HMC), based on individual circumstances.

Where it is not reasonably practical to carry out the necessary adaptations to enable the tenant to live independently in their own home, we will support the tenant to find alternative accommodation which matches their housing requirement and need, making best use of existing stock.

We will subsidise the cost of moving to a suitable property as follows:

- Assistance with decoration costs or some additional decoration to the property while it is vacant;
- Payment to cover removal costs.

The extent of this assistance will be agreed with the tenant on a case by case basis.

Appeals process

Tenants have the right to challenge a refusal for adaptations. Such requests will be considered by the ForHousing Strategic Lead for Asset Management within 10 working days of receipt. Tenants also have the option to take advice from an independent source such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Law Centre or Solicitor.

How the Policy will be delivered

The implementation and management of this policy will be carried out by the Asset Management Team (HMC).

If staff become aware that there are problems with effective operation of the policy or the associated procedures, they should report this to the policy owner. This feedback will be incorporated into the policy / procedural review process.

Related Documents

- Adaptations Procedure

Equality Analysis

Date of approved EA	TBA
Results of EA / Actions taken forward to mitigate any potential negative impacts	TBA

Consultation & Business Intelligence

The changes identified are internal title changes, etc and nothing that fundamentally changes the policy. On consideration of the one minor change to the appeals process this positively support tenants, so it has been decided no consultation is required. In summary there is basically no change to 'consult' on with tenants.

Monitoring Arrangements

We will monitor and report performance in compliance with this policy in the following ways:

- KPI reporting;
- Service Standard Reporting;

Control Data & Approval History

Policy Owner:	TBA
Next review date:	TBA

Issue	Approved By	Date
Approval – V1	ForHousing SMT	30 th April 2018
Approval – V1	CWaC, Cabinet Member - Housing	8 th September 2018
Approval – V2.1	CWaC, Cabinet Member - Housing	28 July 2022

Document Revision History

Date	Version Number	Key Changes
8 th September 2018	1	Original version
15 th March 2021	2	Updated CW&C responsible Director name and title.
10 th January 2022	2.1	Reasons for Refusal – Applications for property extensions removed the 9 month time limit before a case review could take place.