

# Adaptations Policy

**Procedure reference number:** Adap1-POL-FH

**Version number:** 3

**Date applies from:** 04/04/2022

UNCONTROLLED IF PRINTED

## Aim of policy

The Policy sets out ForHousing's 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 customer 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."

While there is no statutory responsibility upon individual housing providers to provide adaptations for their tenants, the Homes and Communities Agency expects them to make provision to assist in the delivery of adaptations to their tenants.

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 work closely with partners to access, on behalf of our tenants, the services of qualified Occupational Therapists and a range of funding and advisory options including:

**Disabled Facilities Grants** - Under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, there is a specific duty upon the local authority to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to eligible applicants to meet the cost of fixed equipment and adaptations to dwellings to meet a disabled person's needs. Available on a tenure-neutral basis, the Mandatory element of DFG is subject to a maximum grant of £30,000, and is dependant upon a means test of the applicant's resources. This may result in the applicant being required to make a contribution towards the cost.

**SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association)** – These offer assistance with adaptations or special equipment to families who have relatives who have been in the forces for at least 18 months at any time.

**Royal British Legion; RAF; Royal National Benevolent Association** – Offer advice and assistance on aids and adaptations.

**British Red Cross** – Medical Loans Service provides equipment to disabled persons, often available free of charge.

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 our Asset Management Strategy, having regard to investment and maintaining the long term sustainability of our properties.

We will set aside a specific budget to assist tenants to attain adaptation work and any adaptations that are deemed necessary and affordable will be provided to tenants using a range of funding mechanisms.

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

ForHousing will publish information on their website to provide detail on how tenants can access adaptations. There are also staff available via face to face, telephone communication and through enquiries received via the tenant app who are able to provide detail to tenants on how they can access adaptations.

ForHousing will make the best use of our 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, ForHousing will maintain and repair these through its 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 (See ForHousing Repairs and Maintenance Policy). Appliances provided at time of initial works will not be maintained by ForHousing, 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. ForHousing will continue to use this service when appropriate.

Following an adaptation request by a tenant, where an Occupational Therapist assessment is considered to be necessary, ForHousing 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.

ForHousing accept that on occasions, specialist advice following assessment may differ. In circumstances where there is no agreement between the parties involved about the nature and/or scope and scale of the adaptation work required, ForHousing’s Strategic Lead for Maintenance will make a final decision in consultation with all involved based on reasonableness.

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.

## **Delivery**

Where we have assessed the adaptation works or following an Occupational Therapist assessment, the works are estimated to be less than £1000 in value (Low Cost/Minor Adaptations); the works will be completed within 3 months from the date of assessment.

Where, following an Occupational Therapist assessment, any necessary works are estimated to be more than £1000 (Major Adaptations), the works will be completed within a maximum of 9 months, from the date of the assessment, these adaptations will be carried out by the local authority adaptations service.

## **Refusal of Adaptation Requests**

ForHousing are unlikely to invest in the provision of adaptations where the benefit achieved for the resident is short term, it is not reasonable or practicable or where strategically, it makes no sense to do so. Such circumstances may include:

- When the applicant occupies a property that is scheduled for modification or major refurbishment within the next two years;
- Where the tenant is actively seeking rehousing;
- Where the tenancy is less than 12 months old; we understand tenants circumstances can change without notice and will review these on a case by case basis.
- Where an extension is recommended;
- 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;
- Where a Long Ramp is required in order to provide access to the front door.

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

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

- A moving in voucher of up to £150 to assist with decoration costs;
- Payment to cover removal costs.
- Two weeks rent credit

ForHousing will keep a register of all adaptations requests and whether they were authorised or refused.

## Appeals Process:

If at any point during the adaptations process a tenant wishes to appeal a decision made by ForHousing not to carry out adaptations in their home; they should contact ForHousing's Adaptations officer initially, via the contact method of their choosing. The Adaptations Officer will ensure all relevant information is taken to enable a full review of the appeal and submit this to a Senior Manager.

A Senior Manager will review the appeal in consultation with all involved based on reasonableness, taking into account any associated risks. The Senior Manager will then make a decision considering all information available to them. They will update the tenant and a response will be sent in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.

## How the policy will be delivered

The implementation and management of this policy will be carried out by ForHousing's Maintenance Team.

Where employees become aware that there are problems with effective operation of this Policy, they should report this to the Policy Owner.

## Related documents

- ForHousing Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- ForHousing Allocations Policy
- ForHousing Equipment and Adaptations Procedure
- Equality Act 2010

## Equality analysis

Date of approved equality analysis	01.11.2021
Actions taken forward to mitigate any potential negative impact	N/A

## Consultation and business intelligence

ForHousing regularly consults tenants on maintenance through the various tenant involvement channels.

## Monitoring arrangements

ForHousing will monitor and report compliance with this Policy through:

- KPI reporting;
- Service Standard Reporting;

## Policy summary for the intranet

The Policy sets out ForHousing’s approach to carrying out adaptations and aims to support tenants ensuring they experience a good quality of life within their homes.

## Words linked to this policy for intranet searches

Equipment, Disability, Disabled, Installation

## Where this policy should be accessible

- Group Services
- ForHousing owned
- ForHousing managed
- Liberty Group
- Forfutures
- ForLiving

## Control data and approval history

<b>Policy owner:</b>	Strategic Lead for Maintenance
<b>Next review date:</b>	28/03/2024

Action	Approved by	Date
Approval	Relevant lead or director	04/04/2022
Approval	Group Executive Leadership Team representative(s)	04/04/2022
Approval	Relevant board	Not required
Equality Analysis review and advise	Business Excellence	01.11.2021
Health and safety review and advise	Health and Safety	Not required
Legal review and advise	Legal Services Executive	Not required
Human Resources review and advise	Human Resources (Trade Union and staff consulted when required)	Not required

## Document revision history

<b>Date approved</b>	<b>Version number</b>	<b>Version history</b>
06.3.2019	V1	Previously ForViva Adaptions Policy V2
<b>Date amended</b>	<b>Version number</b>	<b>Key changes</b>
01.11.2021	V2	Added in appeals process.
<b>28.03.2022</b>	<b>V3</b>	Expanded on detail within the appeals process