



Welfare Adaptations Policy

Council Owned Properties

May 2022 - 2025



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1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to adopt a consistent and common approach to the management of disabled adaptations delivered by the Council.

Housing adaptations can play an important role in allowing people to live independently, and in the comfort and safety in their own home.

Bolsover District Council's (BDC) Adaptations Policy sets out the policy and procedures framework for the provisions of adaptations in council accommodation. This could be in a tenant's current home or to enable the seeking of rehousing to suitable accommodation that may already be adapted and would better meet their housing need.

For the purpose of this policy, an adaptation is defined as an alterations or additions to a property to make it safer and easier to move around the home and undertake everyday tasks.

1.1 Aims

The aim of this policy is to assist, where reasonable and within financial and legislative constraints, tenants to access services that will help them or a member of their household to live as independently as possible. The Council will take a person-centred approach to identify suitable solutions and will work toward achieving this aim by:

- Working in partnership with Derbyshire County Council (DCC) Adult Care Services
- Being fair and accessible
- Encouraging independent living
- Recognising the vital importance of adaptations in supporting disabled people and people with significant health related issues to remain living independently in the community
- Ensuring that all adaptations are necessary, reasonable and practicable
- Prioritising adaptation needs to prevent hardship and to support vulnerable families and individuals
- Making best use of BDC's adapted housing stock by working with the Housing Needs Team
- Minimise waiting lists and waiting times
- Providing advice, assistance and support to explore all other support options
- Facilitating transfers to more appropriate accommodation where required
- Continuing to focus on providing a high quality adaptation service, delivering cost effectiveness and investment in adaptations within available budgets

2. Scope

The policy takes into account the growing recognition of housing authorities' role in supporting the health and social care system. We will work in conjunction with a

range of partners to deliver adaptations and assistance to BDC tenants, or members of their household, who have a disability or chronic illness to help them to continue to live independently.

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 for disabled adaptations.

2.1 Legal Framework

The policy will have due regard to local policies and procedures as well as national legislation, which include the;

- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- Housing Act 1985
- Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002
- Human Rights Act 1998
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018
- Disabled Persons Act 1986
- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- Housing Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Care Act 2014.
- Home Adaptations for Disabled People 2013
- BDC Housing Allocations Policy

3. Principles

Bolsover District Council is committed to delivering an excellent service, ensuring that council tenants and their household, as far as possible, continue to live safely and independently whilst ensuring well-being and quality of life.

The policy will help to fulfil the Council's corporate priorities by;

- Promoting equality and diversity and supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people
- Providing good quality council housing where people choose to live
- Improving health and well-being

4. Statement

4.1 Equality Act 2010 Disability Definition

Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities to ensure they receive the same services, as far as this is possible, as someone who is not disabled.

A disability under this Act is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on the ability to do normal daily activities.

'Substantial' and 'Long-term' mean;

- 'substantial' is more than minor or trivial, i.e. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
- 'long-term' means 12 months or more, i.e. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection

4.2 Definition of Adaptations

Minor Adaptations

Minor Adaptations are low in value and are relatively simple, cost effective solutions to assist a person to live independently. They can be installed swiftly, promote wellbeing and reduce the risk of accidents, consequently averting additional costs associated with hospital admissions, or residential care and support.

Minor adaptations, as an example, can include:

- grab rails
- additional stair rails
- installation of lever taps
- small external handrails
- half steps
- small low-level ramps
- over bath showers
- minor kitchen alterations

Major Adaptations

Major Adaptations are of a higher value and generally require structural changes to a property, for example:

- replacing a bath with a level access shower or wet room
- installing ramps
- hard-standing/drive ways
- property extensions
- adapting a room specifically to make it safer for a disabled person
- installing access facilities, such as a stair lift, through floor lift, door widening

4.3 Who Can Apply?

BDC tenants of any age can apply for an adaptation for themselves or for any member of their household.

Carers of a disabled person can apply on the tenant's behalf.

To be eligible for an adaptation, the tenant or a member of the tenant's household must be an occupant of a BDC property using this as their permanent or principle home.

In the case of a split household where the disabled person is a child (less than 16 years or a child who is in full-time education under 19 years), adaptations will only be considered on one property. This would be the property where the parent the child is dependent on resides. When deciding on which parent the child is dependent on, the following will be taken into account, but is not limited to:

- Who the child resides with primarily
- Any Court Orders in place
- Who Child Benefit is paid to
- Written Agreements between parents
- The individual facts of the case.

Cases outside the above may be reviewed by BDC Welfare Team and will be considered sensitively prior to a decision being made.

If more than one member of the household is disabled and requires adaptations to meet their needs, each disabled person would be required to complete an application form and receive an assessment from Derbyshire County Council's (DCC's) Occupational Therapist.

To be eligible for an adaptation there must be a proven assessed need.

Homeowners, leaseholders and private sector tenants should apply for a [Disabled Facilities Grant](#) from the Council if they require financial assistance for disabled adaptations.

4.4 How to Apply

In the first instance, tenants or a member of their household will be required to do a self-referral to Call Derbyshire, Adult Care, or Starting Point for Children and Young Adults up to 18 years old. In some cases organisations can refer on the disabled persons behalf, for example carers.

Contact [Call Derbyshire](#), telephone: **01629 533190** and request an assessment of needs.

Derbyshire County Council (DCC) Occupational Therapy service will assess the applicants requirements and needs in line with [DCC's policy and procedures](#).

DCC will then make a formal recommendation to BDC to undertake the work.

Hospital Referrals - Patients in hospital who live in council housing can be assessed by the hospital occupational therapist prior to discharge, in these cases they will send their recommendation direct to BDC.

4.5 Welfare Adaptation Procedure

BDC can discharge its duties by any of the following means:

- Rehousing to alternative adapted accommodation
- Provision of adaptations that can be reasonably carried out
- Offer suitable re-housing

Once the assessment and adaptation needs have been identified a panel meeting will be held with a Service Manager from DCC and the Council's Welfare Team where the requests will be considered.

A further visit may be undertaken if necessary with the Occupational Therapist and Housing Needs/Tenancy Management Officer.

4.6 Prioritising Adaptations and Timescales

All works will be carried out in chronological order from the date the referral is received unless the Occupational Therapist or the BDC Welfare Team determine the adaptation needs to be prioritised.

4.7 Maintenance and Tenant Obligations

The Council will meet the costs of all routine repairs and maintenance to any adaptation it funds through this policy. The Tenant must allow access for any servicing or repairs.

It is the responsibility of the Tenant to ensure that any adaptations are not misused or abused. Any repair costs as a result of misuse will be charged to the Tenant.

All adaptations are the property of BDC and must NOT be removed or resold by the tenant.

4.8 Feasibility and Pricing Assessment

The Council will consider a number of factors before approving an adaptation based on the Occupational Therapist's advice, for example:

- Are the adaptation works reasonable and practicable, for example, having regard to the age and character of the property
- Whether it is practical to undertake an adaptation due to design or layout of property
- If access to a property is not suitable to meet the applicants requirements, and the access cannot be reasonably or practically be adapted, then further adaptations to the property may be refused
- Where a stair lift or lift is required in a block of flats, consider whether this is in a communal area or a private staircase. Stair lifts in communal areas will not be approved
- Where a property is being considered for redevelopment
- Where works require planning permission or Building Regulation approval, which would not be granted.

- Condition of property – where such works would pose a significant health and safety risk to staff
- Where a housing application to move is in progress
- Whether the adaptation meets the long term needs of the disabled person/s
- The availability of the applicants existing support network and carers
- The cost of the adaptations necessary to the current property
- Any under-occupation/overcrowding of the present accommodation may be taken into consideration
- Property type and demand
- The likely availability of more appropriate alternative accommodation
- Where a Right to Buy application has been made
- Where the Council is seeking possession of a property because of a breach of tenancy conditions

The list is not exhaustive and each case will be assessed on its on merit.

Occasions may arise where work is pending and a change in circumstances requires a further assessment. Should this occur, if the work pending has not been started, then it will not commence until DCC has submitted a further assessment. The new work may then be added to the pending work to be completed as one job.

4.9 Circumstances where an adaptation will be refused

There may be circumstances where it is not considered reasonable for an adaptation to be approved.

If it is considered by the Council that a tenant or a member of their household's needs would be best met through a move to a more suitable property, a priority transfer within the Council's stock, in accordance with the Allocations Policy, will be sought.

The Welfare Team will provide housing need details to the Housing Options officers to support the move.

Examples of cases where it may be considered unreasonable or impracticable for major adaptation works to be undertaken and more appropriate accommodation may be sought including the following;

- In a family dwelling where under or over occupation exists
- Where there is a requirement to provide an additional bedroom or living room and suitable alternative accommodation is available
- Where a level access shower is required in properties at first floor or above, where there is no lift
- Where access ramps would adversely affect the amenity of the area
- Where the works would significantly affect the Council's ability to let the property in the future and there is suitable alternative accommodation
- To provide access ramps or major adaptations for applicants with a terminal condition when safe and temporary, but effective, solutions can be undertaken quickly
- To communal / joint access paths and steps

- The practicalities of carrying out adaptations to properties with narrow doors and stairways and passages which might make wheelchair use in and around the dwelling difficult
- Where there are competing needs of different members of the family which cannot be met in that particular home
- Where the Council intends to dispose of the property or where the property becomes part of a redevelopment proposal
- Where there is suitable alternative adapted, part adapted accommodation or where it is considered likely that a suitable property will become available within 12 months of the request being made
- Where a tenant leaves a property (through their own choice or through eviction) that has previously been adapted for their needs within 3 years of any adaptation having been completed
- If a request is received for a property where possession proceedings have commenced

The list is not exhaustive and each case will be assessed on its own merit:

4.10 Rent Arrears

Where a request for adaptations is received and there are rent arrears of over £500, contact will be made with the tenant to ensure a payment plan is in place and being adhered to prior to any works being carried out.

4.11 Mobility Scooters

BDC will not ordinarily provide provision for resident's mobility scooters. Each application would be considered on its own merits, taking into account recommendations from the Occupational Therapist, as well as having regards to Building Control and Planning Regulations.

Tenants will be responsible for altering access paths/gates and supplying hard standings, sheds, electrical supply and any other associated works connected to accommodating their scooter, after receiving permission from BDC and where applicable Building Control and Planning.

Mobility scooters must not be positioned in communal areas or stored near habitable properties, to ensure prevention of risk of fire.

4.12 Removal and Recycling of Adaptations

Where a void property already has an adaptation in-situ a full assessment will be undertaken to identify the age and condition of the adaptation and whether it would be suitable for the adaptation to remain.

No adaptations funded by the Council should be removed by the tenant or anyone acting on their behalf without the agreement of the Council.

Where it is identified that:

- the adaptation is not economical it will be removed as part of the voids process

- the adaptation is in good condition the property type will be assessed for long-term suitability and where appropriate, adaptations will be kept in-situ to ensure best use of the property
- there is no need for the adaptation which has been installed, consideration will be given to removing the adaptation and restoring the property to the current lettable standard for the property type

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

Where General Needs accommodation has been adapted, the Council may seek to find a suitable applicant, through the usual Allocations Policy and procedures, who will benefit from such adaptations.

4.13 Right to Buy Applications

Where a Right to Buy application is submitted, adaptation applications will be cancelled.

Any removable adaptations i.e. stairlifts already in situ, will be offered to the Tenant as part of the Right to Buy purchase at a cost which will include depreciation. If the Tenant declines, the equipment will be removed prior to the completion of sale.

4.14 Funding

The Council sets a budget on an annual basis to carry out adaptations for the financial year, therefore adaptation works are subject to the availability of funding.

In the event that resources become limited in the future or demand increases significantly, the Council will allocate funding for adaptations based on their priority.

Derbyshire County Council provides a range of aids and equipment to assist people with a disability to maintain their independence. These are delivered directly to their home, therefore the Council will not fund non-fixed equipment, for example:

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

Adaptations are normally funded to the value of £30,000. If the works required exceed this amount, the case will be referred to the Housing Stock Management Group to determine if the adaptation is a viable option or alternative accommodation to suit the applicants need would be more practical.

There is currently no requirement for a financial assessment (means test) for any applicant requesting adaptations. This requirement, however, is still in place for private sector adaptations by means of the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG).

4.15 Appeals

If an applicant wishes to appeal against any decision taken relating to their requested adaptation they should set out the reasons for the appeal in writing, either by letter or email, addressed to the Head of Housing Management and Enforcement and the Head of Property Services & Housing Repairs.

Contact details; Bolsover District Council, The Arc, High Street, Clowne. S43 4JY.
Email: enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk

A joint decision will be made and the applicant will be notified in writing with an explanation for the decision.

If the appeal is rejected the decision will include the options available, for example, moving to an accessible or adapted property.

Should an applicant remain dissatisfied, they can access the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure at: www.bolsover.gov.uk

4.16 Monitoring

The BDC Welfare Team will feed back the outcome of the adaptation request to Derbyshire County Council to enable them to update their cases.

Internally adaptations will be monitored through the Housing Stock Management Group. An annual report will be submitted to the group detailing performance.

5. Responsibility for Implementation

The Policy will be implemented by the Council's Welfare Team working in partnership with other Council departments and external organisations, for example, but the list is not exhaustive:

- Council's Housing Needs Team
- Derbyshire County Council
- Care providers
- Social Care
- Hospital Occupational Therapists
- Contractors
- Tenancy Management Team
- Asset Management team
- Property Services and Repairs team