



OFFICIAL

Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Housing Liaison Board on 21 October 25

Agenda Item 12: Update to Welfare Adaptations Policy

Classification:	This report is Public
Report By:	Housing Services Manager

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

To inform tenants of recent updates to the Welfare Adaptations Policy.

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 Bolsover District Council has 4940 housing properties. The Council is committed to providing suitable housing to meet the needs of its residents and housing adaptations can play an important role in allowing people to live independently in comfort and safety in their own home.
- 1.2 The Welfare Adaptation Policy (“the Policy”) provides a framework for the provision of adaptations to the homes of tenants living in Council accommodation. This could be in their current home or rehousing to suitable accommodation that may already be adapted and would meet their housing need.
- 1.3 For the purpose of this Policy, an adaptation is alterations or addition to the property to make it safer and easier to move around the home and do everyday tasks.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

- 2.1 The Council approved the Welfare Adaptation Policy in May 2022. This set out who can apply for a Welfare Adaptation and the procedure we follow when considering requests. 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 principal home.

- 2.2 The Policy also provides definitions of adaptations at paragraph 4.2. Minor adaptations are simple, cost-effective solutions to assist a person to live independently. Examples include grab rails, small external handrails and over bath showers. These tend to be under £1000. In the last financial year, we have undertaken 42 minor adaptations.
- 2.3 Major adaptations are valued over £1000 and are generally structural changes to a property, for example, replacing a bath with a level access shower or wet room, hard standing/driveways and stair lifts. In the last financial year, we have undertaken 141 major adaptations.
- 2.4 The Policy is now due for renewal. As part of the review process, we held several sessions with the various officers involved in the Welfare Adaptation process, including a representative from Derbyshire County Council. In addition, we reviewed the Housing Ombudsman Good Practice Guidance issued in February 2025 regarding disabled adaptations in social housing.
- 2.5 We invited several tenants who had been through the Welfare Adaptation process to form a working group to discuss their experiences, make suggestions for improvement to the Policy and Process. The key theme was around improved communication during the process. As a result of which we have implemented an additional step within the process regarding the applicant being notified in writing about the application, outlined at paragraph 4.5. We have also stated the applicant will be notified of the reasons for refusal in writing and be provided details of who they are able to appeal the decision (paragraph 4.9).
- 2.6 We have amended the Policy to be clearer with regards to what works, we can and will undertake to ensure that we are managing expectations. The key changes within the policy are as follows;
- Eligibility – we have added that the occupant must be using the property as their permanent or principal home for 12 months or more.
 - Where a stair lift is required in a block of flats this will only be considered following a feasibility and fire risk assessment.
 - Feasibility assessments will be undertaken when looking at the provision of hard standing for wheelchairs users or where this could provide a more economical solution to provide a hard standing than providing additional paths/ramping from the roadside.
 - Ramping for self-purchased wheelchairs or mobility scooters may not be considered unless assessed as a necessary requirement by an Occupational Therapist or other suitably qualified medical professional.
 - Where a level access shower is required in properties at first floor or above, this can be considered following a feasibility and/or accommodation needs assessment.
 - Should alternative suitable accommodation become available prior to work commencing we can make this as an alternative offer to the adaption agreed.
 - We have removed reference to £500 rent arrears threshold, rather stating

where there are any arrears, that we make contact with the applicant to ensure a payment plan is in place and being adhered to, prior to works being carried out.

- 2.7 Customer Services Scrutiny have reviewed and provided comments on the updated Policy which were verbally reported to the Executive.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 It is considered good practice to have a policy which sets out the Council's approach to Welfare Adaptations. Having a robust policy protects the Council, both when it makes decisions to make adaptations and in those limited circumstances when we have no alternative but to refuse the request.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The policy is considered necessary so that members of the public are aware of the adaptations we are able to undertake, the process we will follow and provides an appeals process. The changes made are based on Ombudsman recommendations and comments from our tenants.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That members note the updated Welfare Adaptation Policy approved by Executive on 6th October 2025.

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment and Housing	
Ambition: Customers	
Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Continuous improvement to service delivery through innovation, modernisation and listening to customers</i>	
Ambition: Housing	
Priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Building more, good quality, affordable housing, and being a decent landlord</i>	

DOCUMENT INFORMATION	
Appendix No	Title
1.	Updated Welfare Adaptation Policy