

Tenant and Leaseholder Services

Aids and adaptations policy

1.0 Purpose and scope

The purpose of this policy is to enable Thanet District Council (TDC) to provide housing which best meets the assessed needs of tenants with disabilities. This includes:

- Helping tenants with disabilities to live independently. Within their home. By providing a range of adaptations.
- Supporting tenant's discharge from the hospital. (Where adaptations will help them to return home.)
- Helping new tenants with disabilities to move into a new home.
- Making sure that TDC's stock of homes, suitable for people with disabilities, is used effectively.

This policy is aligned to the way that housing adaptations are managed through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) regimes and in line with other councils including:

- The consideration of tenants adaptations as assessed by a qualified Occupational Therapist registered with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) in the UK.
- Adaptations that TDC will not progress.
- Indicative timescales within which work is expected to be carried out.

The policy will guide Occupational Therapists (OTs) and other professionals to understand what TDC will and will not be able to assist with in terms of adaptations to a tenant's home.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 Disabled person as defined by The Equality Act 2010

Someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

A long-term adverse effect refers to disabilities that:

- Last for 12 months or longer.
- Are likely to last for the remainder of a person's life.

Occupational Therapists (OTs) and other professionals are required to confirm that all criteria apply to each assessment submitted to TDC for consideration.

2.2 Minor Adaptations

Works of £1,000 and under and stairlifts up to £5,000 are considered routine and are progressed in referral date order within 3 months.

2.3 Major Adaptations

Works over £1,000 are sub-categorised by the OT as either 'critical' or 'substantial'. These are reviewed monthly with 'critical' taking higher priority.

3.0 Adaptation Process Overview

Tenants requiring home adaptations are required to undergo an assessment of needs.

- 1] Tenant contacts KCC Social Services.
- 2] KCC Occupational Therapy depts conducts an assessment of needs.
- 3] TDC receives the OT's request, accompanied by recommendations for aids and/or home adaptations.
- 4] TDC considers the OT's recommendations in line with the Aids and Adaptations Policy and progresses qualifying works accordingly.

3.1 Funding and prioritisation

The funding for aids and adaptations is set annually with demand often exceeding the financial resources available:

1. Adaptations are prioritised by the OT through an assessment of how critical and urgent the adaptation is.
2. Adaptations are placed on a waiting list

This ensures the highest priority cases are dealt with first and will consider the length of time a tenant has been waiting.

Adaptations on the waiting list may be delayed by the following:

- Depletion of funding
- Critical Adaptations taking priority

3.2 Timescales

- We aim to process requests for adaptations in a timely fashion - normally within 2 weeks of receipt of OT recommendations.
- We will prioritise approved works that are essential to enable a new tenant to move into their new home.
- TDC will maintain adaptations in line with landlord responsibilities under a tenancy agreement.
- Provision of appliances and portable specialist equipment (including ceiling track hoists) will not be funded by TDC as these are either a tenant's responsibility, or that of KCC Social Services.

4.0. Where we will not undertake an Adaptation

TDC will not (unless exceptional circumstances prevail) undertake adaptations under the following circumstances:

4.1 Tenant circumstances

- Under occupying by two or more bedrooms.
- Statutory overcrowding.
- Threat of eviction (due to rent arrears/ASB/breach of tenancy).
- Awaiting for a transfer or mutual exchange to another property.
- Open application for right to buy.
- Within 5 years of leaving a property with suitable adaptations.
- Where suitable alternative accommodation will be available within 12 months of the request being made.
- TDC will not make provision for mobility scooters.

We will consult with residents in some circumstances to explore alternative options to adapting the current home.

4.2 Where the property

- Is not suitable for adaptation.
- The adaptation would adversely affect the council's ability to make the best use of the stock and relet the property in the future.
- Adaptations will not be made in communal areas.
- Where TDC does not own the property.
- Where the property is used for temporary housing.
- The cost is excessive.
- The property is owned by a leaseholder. (Leaseholders are able to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant.)

4.3 Specialist free standing equipment

- TDC will not install specialist free standing equipment as this is a KCC Social Services responsibility.
- Bath and shower stretchers that are fixed to the structure of the property will only be considered after all alternative solutions have been explored.

Adaptations are subject to the constraints of the existing construction of the property, health and safety regulations, and a fire safety assessment.

5.0 Exceptional adaptation categories

5.1 Extensions and Conversions

Extensions and/or conversions will be subject to planning and building control approvals and will be considered under the following circumstances:

- The property is capable of being adapted to meet a tenant's needs.
- The costs are reasonable.
- The adaptation is likely to have an on-going future demand.
- There is no other reasonable viable alternative (including re-housing).

5.2 Pavement crossovers and hard standings

- All other options will be explored before TDC will approve off road hard standing adaptations.
- These requests are subject to approval by TDC Planning and Kent County Council Highways departments.

5.3 Undertaking own works for disabled adaptations

- If a tenant carries out their own work, they will need permission from TDC before any work is started.

6.0 Disputes

If the tenant is not satisfied with the decision, they have the right to make a complaint through the TDC formal complaints process.

7.0 Relevant legislation

In determining this policy, regard has been given to the relevant statutory provisions and requirements mentioned in:

- The Care Act 2014,
- The Equality Act 2010,
- The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970,
- The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, as amended by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Armed Forces Act 2021

8.0 Document control

Date	Version	Action	Amendments
4 November 2021	1	New policy	
31 January 2022	1	Equality Impact Assessment	Insert headings. Add full stops and simplify language for readability and access for screen readers.
17/03/2022	1	Approval for adoption by Cabinet	
15/06/2023	2	Review of policy	<p>The following revisions were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to remove rent arrears as a reason to not carry out an adaptation • to simplify the dispute process by guiding tenants to the complaints process • removing the timescales for completion of various adaptations • add our methodology for prioritisation of cases
13/02/2024	2	Equality Impact Assessment	
	2	Approval for adoption by Cabinet	

