



# Aids and Adaptations Policy

Last reviewed June 2021

# 1.0 Aids and Adaptations

## Policy overview

This policy is managed and adhered to by the housing service. This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with government legislation, guidance and good practice.

## 1.1 Introduction

This policy sets out Dacorum Borough Council's (DBC's) approach to assessing proposed Aids and Adaptations for residents living in DBC properties. DBC will manage resources and funding efficiently to enable residents with a mental or physical impairment to live more safely and independently within their own homes where possible. If the current home is not suitable for major adaptations, it may be more appropriate for the council to consider a direct offer in line with the Housing Allocations Policy.

## 1.2 Aim(s) of the policy:

The aims of this policy are to;

- To ensure that the needs of residents with a mental or physical impairment are prioritised, subject to available funding.
- To set out the criteria by which the Council will assess all requests for adaptation work.
- To maintain the housing stock effectively through Asset Management.
- To comply with legal and statutory requirements in relation to the provision of aids and adaptations.

## 1.3 Links to the council's corporate aims:

This policy supports the council's corporate priorities, which are set out in [‘Delivering for Dacorum’ – Corporate Plan 2020 - 2025](#).

- A clean, safe and enjoyable environment.
- Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need.
- Delivering an efficient modern council.

## 1.4 Equality and diversity

The council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in housing services and has procedures in place to ensure that all residents are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

## 1.5 Policy Statement(s)

We will consider minor adaptations based on Occupational Therapist (OT) referral and total costs (see 2.1).

We will consider major adaptations based on OT referral, site visit and the elements detailed below (see 2.3).

We may refuse to carry out works if the qualifying conditions are not met (see 2.4).

We will consider an extension if the criteria detailed below are met (see 2.5).

Before DBC decide on major adaptation applications, the tenant must sign to agree that they have accepted the wider implications and approve for works to proceed (see 2.6).

Where a property has a major adaptation it will no longer qualify to be purchased under the Right to Buy (see 2.7).

The tenant will be notified in writing if the application is refused and will be contacted by contractors if the application is approved (see 2.8).

An asbestos survey may be required before works begin (see 2.9).

Tenants may request an appeal to review an adverse decision (see 2.10).

## 1.6 Emergency Restrictions

*“The Council is required to respond to any local or national restrictions imposed by central government. The administration of this and other Council policies could, therefore, be impacted by a pandemic or other emergency for the period that such restrictions are in operation.”*

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## 2.0 Aids and Adaptations

### Policy detail

### 2.1) Occupational Therapist Assessment

An Occupational Therapist (OT) must complete a referral and submit a 'Council Housing Recommendations for Work' form for DBC to consider any adaptation. To request an OT assessment, the tenant can phone 0300 123 4042 or go to the referral page ['Ask for Social Care Help'](#) page on the Herts County Council website.

### 2.2) Minor Adaptations

Includes adaptations such as:

- Step ramps
- Handrails
- Grab rail
- Over-bath shower
- Lever taps

Total costs of minor adaptations totalling more than £3,000 will fall under major adaptations.

The Occupational Therapist (OT) will complete a referral and submit a 'Council Housing Recommendations for Work' form. The Project team will review the form and costs involved to decide whether the adaptation is eligible, in line with this policy.

If the adaptation/s is eligible, our contractor will schedule the works in line with:

- Priority as specified by OT, using the definition 'Urgent' or 'Routine'.
- Availability of budget.

If the adaptation is approved, the contractor/s will contact the tenant to arrange asbestos survey/adaptation work.

In all cases we aim to complete the works within 20 working days.

If recommendations are refused, DBC will contact the tenant in writing.

### 2.3) Major Adaptation

Includes adaptations such as:

- The installation of stair lifts and level access showers
- Bathroom and kitchen conversions
- Extensions and access alterations

The OT will produce a referral and prioritise accordingly. All 'major' adaptations will be discussed by the Project Team without exception.

If the current home is not suitable for major adaptations, it may be more appropriate for the council to consider a direct offer in line with the Housing Allocations Policy.

If a site visit is required, the tenant will be visited as below:

1. Urgent - within 10 working days
2. Routine - within 20 working days

The project team will use the 'Aids and Adaptations Decision Making Tree' (See **Appendix A**) to review the request and score each of the elements below 1, 3 or 5:

- External Access to the property
- Under occupancy/Property future proofing
- Health Concerns
- Health & Safety
- Technical Rationale
- Qualifying Conditions

Disruption level and available funding will also be taken into account.

If any one of these score a 5, or the total score is more than 20, the tenant will be advised in writing that we will not proceed with the adaptation. The reasons will be set out clearly and the next steps will be advised.

If the adaptation is approved, the contractor/s will contact the tenant to arrange asbestos survey/adaptation work. The following target completion timescales apply:

- Urgent - 9 weeks
- Routine - 30 weeks

In cases where planning permission or other regulatory elements are required, we cannot guarantee the timescales will be met.

## 2.0 Aids and Adaptations

### Policy detail

#### 2.4) Qualifying Conditions

DBC may refuse to carry out adaptations for any of the following reasons:

- The work is inappropriate to the type of dwelling for technical or practical reasons
- The work would adversely affect communal areas
- The work would extend beyond the curtilage of the property rented by the Tenant
- The Tenant has applied under Right to Buy. In this case, the tenant should apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).
- The Tenant is unwilling to move to a more suitable dwelling already identified.
- The work is un-economical and moving the Tenant to more appropriate accommodation should be considered.
- The Tenant is subject to an order of the court relating to their tenancy (i.e. Rent Arrears or Anti-Social Behaviour)
- The Tenant is subject to ongoing court proceedings relating to their tenancy (i.e. Rent Arrears or Anti-Social Behaviour)
- The property is overcrowded

If we have already made adaptations to a property, we will take these into consideration when assessing proposals for further adaptations. However, if the tenants' condition has deteriorated or the new request is not considered appropriate for the reasons stated above, the adaptation can be refused.

#### 2.5) Application for Extensions

Occupational Therapists may recommend the construction of ground floor facilities in order to meet the needs of a tenant.

For an extension request to be approved, all rehousing solutions must be investigated and all the following criteria must be satisfied:

- The OT must clearly demonstrate the tenants need for the extension.
- The extension must be deemed reasonable and practicable in terms of cost and feasibility. If this is not the case, rehousing will be the only course of action.

The Group Manager, Property and Place will assess the case and have the final decision.

The Housing Needs team will attend the project team extension meeting in partnership with:

- The recommending Occupational Therapist
- Any other required Social Services representative
- Property and Place adaptations surveyor

Alternative options will be explored in line with the Housing Allocations Policy. If a suitable property that adequately meets the tenants' (and their households') physical, mental and social support needs is identified, and rehousing will not create any further care needs, this will be offered as the solution.

If a property does not meet a qualifying condition, the extension will be refused and alternative rehousing options considered.

The tenant will be notified in writing, whether the referral for an extension has been approved or refused.

#### 2.6) Tenant Consent for Major Adaptations

Additional ground floor facilities/bedrooms may result in increased financial expenditure for the tenant. Before any decisions are made on major adaptation applications of this type, DBC will inform the tenant of the implications an extension may have on rent, insurance, benefits, energy bills etc. The tenant must sign that they approve for works to proceed and that they will accept the wider implications of the work being carried out.

Failure to sign this form will lead to the application being rejected.

#### 2.7) Right to Buy

Where a home has received a major adaptation or extension making it substantially different from our ordinary dwelling houses and suitable for occupation by physically disabled residents, the property will then become exempt from the Right to Buy under schedule 5 of the Housing Act 1985. This will apply for the current tenant and for any future tenants following the property being re-let.

## 2.0 Aids and Adaptations

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The group managers will undertake the review within 20 working days of receipt of the request. They will review all written information relating to the case and hold a case meeting, where the tenant or their advocate can present any mitigating factors they wish to be considered in support of their case.

DBC will notify the tenant of the outcome within seven days of the review's conclusion.

### 2.8) Notification of decision

When adaptations are refused the tenant will be notified in writing of the decision. When adaptations are approved the tenant will be contacted directly by the council appointed contractor.

### 2.9) Asbestos Survey

Before any intrusive minor, major or extension works can be undertaken, an asbestos refurbishment and demolition survey is required. The survey may not be required if we already have one on file. Following asbestos survey tenants will be contacted by the contractor to undertake the works

### 2.10) Appeals

A tenant may request a review of an adverse decision by writing to the signatory on the letter of notification within 6 weeks of the date of the letter, stating clearly the reason(s) for the request for review.

The review will be conducted by two Group Managers who have not previously been involved in the case.

They will be provided with all of the documentation collected in relation to the case.

## 3.0

### Links to other corporate documents

This policy links to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies and strategies:

- Housing Allocations Policy
- Tenant Alterations and Improvement Policy
- Repairs, Maintenance and Improvement Policy
- Asbestos Management Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Safety in Communal Areas Policy
- Decant Policy
- Help to Move Policy
- Mobility Scooter Policy
- Tenant Compensation Policy
- Vehicular Crossing Over Amenity Greens Policy
- Gas Safety Policy
- Right to Buy Policy
- Temporary Accommodation Policy
- Mutual Exchange Policy
- Asset Management Strategy

## 4.0

### Legislation

The legislation listed below will be taken into consideration when implementing this policy:

- [The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970](#)
- [The Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Care Act \(2014\)](#)
- [The Regulatory Reform Order 2002](#)
- [The Housing Act 1985](#)
- [The Housing Act 2004](#)
- [The Housing Health and Safety Rating System](#)
- [Home Adaptations for Disabled People \(2013\)](#)

## 5.0

### Appendices

The appendix listed below forms part of this policy:  
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- Appendix A – Aids and Adaptations Decision Making Tree Template