

Cheshire West & Chester Council

# Council Housing

## Adaptations Policy

Issue date: July 2024  
Review date: July 2027



Cheshire West  
and Chester

## 1. Management Information

Approval Date:	July 2024
Next Review Date:	July 2027
Policy Owner:	Janet Lawton, Head of Council Landlord Service
Responsible Service Area:	Council Housing Management Board
Responsible Director:	Director of Economy and Housing

## 2. Introduction

The policy sets out our 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 tenant 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."

## 3. Aim of Policy

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 the Council's Asset Management Strategy, having regard to investment and maintaining the long-term sustainability of the housing stock.

## 4. Strategic context

This policy helps the Council to meet the following national and local strategic aims.

Social Housing Regulations Act 2023 – Consumer Standards

- Quality and Safety Standard
- Tenancy Standard

[CWAC Borough Plan 2024 – 2028](#) - sets out how the Council will work with all its residents to build a stronger future where the Council and residents all play their part in creating thriving, caring and sustainable communities.

The Borough Plan has six missions as follows:

- Starting well - The best start for the borough`s children and young people, with improved opportunity, a healthier start, greater resilience in families and the best possible support and care when it is needed.
- Tackling hardship and poverty - More people feel more financially secure as the causes and impact of hardship and poverty are addressed by working alongside residents.
- Resilient people living their best lives - Local people are enabled to flourish, be healthy, happy and independent for longer in supportive communities.
- Opportunity in a fair local economy - Local people and businesses contribute to and benefit from a strong and fair local economy.
- Neighbourhood pride - Residents live in well maintained, connected and safe places with good and affordable homes.
- Greener communities - Individuals, public services and businesses take action to move to tackle the climate emergency, achieve net zero, protect the natural environment and adapt to the impact of climate change.

[Together with Tenants Charter | Cheshire West and Chester Council  
Council-housing-asset-management-strategy-final  
Housing Assistance Policy 2024](#)

## **5. Definition and legislation**

For this policy, an adaptation is an alteration or addition to any aspect of a property which is provided 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.

### **Definition of Major and Minor Adaptations**

We provide a range of minor and major adaptations to help you to remain living safely and independently in your home.

Minor adaptations are fixed alterations that are usually low cost. This includes:

- Grab rails
- Handrails
- Bannister rails
- Key safes
- Alterations to stairs or steps
- Fold down rails
- And hearing loop systems

Major adaptations would be alterations that are on the larger scale. It can cover internal, and external changes, to your home. This includes:

- Ramps
- Widening of doors
- The level of essential kitchen work surfaces
- Ceiling track hoist
- Changing the layout of a room
- A level access shower

## **6. How the policy will be delivered**

The implementation and management of this policy will be carried out by the Asset Management Team. If staff become aware that there are problems with effective operation of the policy or the associated procedures, they should report this to the policy owner. This feedback will be incorporated into the policy / procedural review process.

### **Delivery**

The Occupational Therapist will include on their referral a priority rating and we will use this to inform our delivery programme.

Where we have assessed the adaptation works or following an Occupational Therapist assessment, if the works are estimated to be less than £1,000 in value (Low Cost/Minor Adaptations); the works will be completed in line with the following timescales:

- Priority 1 (emergency) 1 day
- Priority 2 (urgent) 3 days
- All others (routine) 20 days

Where, following an Occupational Therapist assessment, any necessary works are estimated to be more than £1,000 (Major Adaptations), the works will be completed within a maximum of 6 months, from the date of the receipt of the OT assessment, excluding property extensions. Major adaptations will have a maximum spend in line with CW&C Home Assistance Policy.

### **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.

Following an adaptation request by a tenant, where an Occupational Therapist assessment is necessary, we will arrange for an Occupational Therapist to visit, discuss individual needs and assess whether adaptation works may be necessary and appropriate to meet the long-term needs of the individual.

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.

The Council's Housing Assistance Policy 2024 sets out the eligibility criteria for Disabled Facilities Grants assistance and these are adopted here as follows:

- Must be necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled person
- Must be reasonable and practicable to carry out given the age and condition of the dwelling
- Must be the most cost-effective option and achieve best value for money
- Works to facilitate access and enable independent living:
  - Facilitate access to the home and garden
  - Making the premises safer
  - Access to the principal family room and bedroom
  - Access to a toilet, wash hand basin, bath and/or shower
  - Facilitate the preparation and cooking of food
  - Better or more appropriate heating
  - Control of power, light and heat
- An adaptation to facilitate hospital discharge
- An adaptation required to avoid risk of carer breakdown
- An adaptation required urgently due to life-limiting illness or rapid deterioration

### **Accessibility and Awareness**

We want the aids and adaptations process to be easily accessible and simple to follow. Tenants and their representatives can request adaptations in several ways.

- By completing the online form: [Find the answer - Section 1 - Self](#)
- By writing to the Council Housing Service: Cheshire West and Chester Council, Council Housing, Wellington Road, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BZ
- Over the phone by calling: 0300 123 8123
- In person by calling into The Portal, Wellington Road, Ellesmere Port

Advice and support can also be provided by your Community Occupational Therapist if you have one.

### **Refusal of Adaptation Requests**

We are unlikely to invest in the provision of adaptations where the benefit achieved for the resident is short term; it is not practicable to do so. Such circumstances may include:

- Where the tenant is actively seeking rehousing.
- Where the tenancy is less than 12 months old.
- When the adaptation requested is not structurally practicable.
- Where a property is under-occupied or overcrowded and major adaptations are requested.
- Where a request is made to provide a level access shower above ground floor level. Future lettable 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.

- We would normally only provide adaptations to an individual's primary place of residence.
- Applications for property extensions will, in most cases, be refused and suitable alternative accommodation will be sought. If it has not been possible to relocate the tenant, a review of the case will take place by Asset Management
- Discretion will be exercised by Asset Management, based on individual circumstances.

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

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

- Assistance with decoration costs or some additional decoration to the property while it is vacant.
- Payment to cover removal costs.

The extent of this assistance will be agreed with the tenant on a case-by-case basis.  
Appeals Process

Tenants have the right to challenge a refusal for adaptations. Such requests will be considered by the Strategic Lead for Asset Management within 10 working days of receipt. Tenants also have the option to take advice from an independent source such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Law Centre or Solicitor.

### **Maintenance of Adaptations**

Once adaptations have been installed, we will maintain and repair these through the 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. Appliances provided at time of initial works will not be maintained by us, i.e. a cooker installed at the time of a rise and fall kitchen will be the responsibility of the tenant.

### **Register of Adapted Properties**

We will develop a register of adapted properties so that, where possible, re-lets can be matched with tenants' individual needs. We will make the best use of the housing stock to ensure that disabled tenants are enabled to access and live in housing that is appropriate to their needs.

## **7. Equity and reasonable adjustment statement**

We value diversity and work to create an inclusive environment for customers and staff, where everyone has access to the same opportunities. We welcome our responsibility to comply with equalities legislation and regulatory requirements that relate to equity, diversity and inclusion and aim to do more. Through our activities we

aim to remove systemic barriers to equal opportunities and eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment, and victimisation within our organisation.

We are committed to providing excellent customer services, which are fair, equitable and inclusive. As such, we will endeavour to understand and make any reasonable adjustments required for customers in line with our Reasonable Adjustment Statement and the Equality Act 2010. Any reasonable adjustment provided will be recorded and kept under active review.

## 8. Related Documents

- Adaptations Procedure

## 9. Equality Analysis

Results of EA / Actions taken forward to mitigate any potential negative impacts	<p>Inform that this policy can be provided in alternative formats.</p> <p>Inform about the ongoing equality and diversity training for staff in the delivery of this policy.</p>
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See appendix 1 for full Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment.

## 10. Consultation and Business Intelligence

The policy was created in consultation with the Council's tenants leaseholders and staff.

## 11. Monitoring and review

The Council Housing Management Board has responsibility for the monitoring and review of this policy. This policy will be reviewed every three years starting from the date it is approached and adopted.

We will monitor and report performance in compliance with this policy in the following ways:

- KPI reporting.
- Service Standard Reporting.

## 12. Approval and Review History

The approval route for all policies and procedures is via the Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning who has delegated powers for policy approval from the Council's Executive Cabinet.

Version	Approved by	Date
Approval – V1	ForHousing SMT	30 April 2018
Approval – V1	Cabinet Member – Homes and Planning	8 September 2018

Version	Approved by	Date
Approval – V2.1	Cabinet Member – Homes and Planning	28 July 2022
Approval – V2.2	Cabinet Member of Homes and Planning	30 July 2024
Approval – V2.3	Cabinet Member of Homes and Planning	26 June 2025
Approval – V2.4	Cabinet Member of Homes and Planning	4 September 2025

### 13. Document Revision History

Date amended	Version	Key Changes
September 2018	1	Original version
March 2021	2	Updated CW&C responsible Director name and title.
January 2022	2.1	Reasons for Refusal – Applications for property extensions removed the 9-month time limit before a case review could take place.
May 2024	2.2	Adopted the DGF eligibility criteria from the housing assistance policy.  The reviewer of appeal requests updated to read ForHousing Strategic Lead for Asset Management
July 2024	2.3	Revised version following tenant feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved layout to policy document.</li> <li>• Changed of timescales for priorities to reflect procedure.</li> <li>• Included statement about major adaptations in line with CW&amp;C Home Assistance Policy.</li> <li>• Included definitions section for minor and major adaptations.</li> <li>• Included section on accessibility and awareness.</li> <li>• Made clear that this policy document can be provided in alternative formats.</li> </ul> Informed about the ongoing equality and diversity training being provided to staff in the delivery of this policy.
September 2025	2.4	Revised version to take into account the insourcing of the housing management service from ForHousing to the Council.

## Appendix 1 – Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

<b>Area of activity or change</b>	<b>Adaptations Policy</b>
<b>IMDF Approval</b>	<b>Allan Batty Senior Housing Policy Officer</b>

<b>STAGE ONE - SCOPING</b>	<b>Outlines the decision that is being made any why</b>
<b>STAGE TWO - RESEARCH</b>	<b>Outlines the collaboration and research that will inform this decision</b>
<b>STAGE THREE - FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>Considers how learnings from research and engagement are being embedded, the potential impact of the decision on different people and how these can best be managed.</b>

<b>STAGE ONE – SCOPING</b>	
<b>Consider points such as:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where has the proposed activity or change come from and why is it needed?</li> <li>Why is it important to ForHousing?</li> <li>How will this affect the tenant / customer journey or colleague experience?</li> </ul>	<b>What activity or change is being proposed and why?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review policy to meet the requirements of the Council and its tenants</li> <li>Review policy to comply with legislative and regulatory requirements and work within the spirit of the Homes and Communities Agency guide: “Minor Adaptations without Delay”</li> <li>Consult with tenants.</li> </ul>
	<b>What benefits are you trying to achieve?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy to be updated to consider all requirements</li> <li>Policy to be clear about working within the framework of the Council’s Asset Management Strategy, having regard to investment and maintaining the long-term sustainability of the housing stock.</li> <li>Policy to be informative, to be clear and in plain English</li> <li>Meet the needs of tenants</li> </ul>
<b>STAGE TWO – RESEARCH</b>	
<b>Consider points such as:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What groups or individuals will you approach to discuss this?</li> <li>How will you ensure that these people are diverse and representative? (See Equity and Diversity table in stage three)</li> </ul>	<b>Who will help develop your thinking so that different experiences and perspectives are included?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation with tenants using various methods to ensure a diverse range of tenants have an opportunity to feedback.</li> <li>Undertake an equality impact assessment to identify any positive and/or negative impacts on characteristics.</li> </ul>
	<b>What research will you do to inform your understanding?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review all relevant requirements, including the Council’s Housing Assistance Policy.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there any data you can look at to support you?</li> </ul>	
<b>STAGE THREE – FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS</b>	
<b>Consider points such as:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What have people told you are some of the key issues?</li> <li>What good practice is happening in other organisations?</li> <li>What changes are you planning to make because of the things you've found out?</li> </ul>	<b>What have you learnt from your research and engagement?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation with tenants and leaseholders informed on minor changes to the policy which is recorded in the final document.</li> </ul>
	<b>What have you learnt from your research and engagement?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation with tenants informed on minor changes to the policy which is recorded in the final document. For example: include a definitions section about major and minor adaptations.</li> </ul>

<b>Equity and Diversity</b> - Not everyone has the same access to opportunities or services, and the things that make us different – such as the characteristics listed below – can affect our experiences and outcomes. Therefore, it is important to consider how different people could be impacted by any activity or change we want to bring about.	
<b>How could the proposed activity or change affect people with these characteristics (positively or negatively)?</b>	
<b>Age</b> (Younger or older people)	
<b>Caring responsibilities</b> (Parents and those looking after an older or disabled person)	
<b>Digital inclusion</b> (People without access to digital platforms or devices)	
<b>Educational attainment</b> (People who have experienced barriers to formal education)	
<b>Ethnicity, race and nationality</b> (Including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers)	
<b>Financial inclusion</b> (People experiencing financial barriers or challenges)	
<b>Marriage / civil partnership</b> (Legal union between different-sex or same-sex couples)	
<b>Mental health</b> (People with a mental disability or ill-health)	
<b>Neurodiversity</b> (Such as people with ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia)	Both
<b>Physical health</b> (People with a physical disability or ill-health)	Both
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> (Someone who is pregnant or has recently given birth)	
<b>Religion, faith or belief</b> (All religions and faiths, including people with no religion)	
<b>Sex</b> (Men and women)	
<b>Gender identity</b> (Including trans and non-binary people)	
<b>Sexual orientation</b> (Such as Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people)	

Any other characteristic	
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Managing positive and negative effects									
<p><b>Consider points such as:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you need to escalate any issues or seek legal advice?</li> <li>Can you see any opportunities to promote or celebrate positive outcomes?</li> <li>How will you build monitoring into the implementation of your activity or change and who will you report to?</li> </ul>	<p><b>If potential negative effects have been identified, how will any harm be reduced or avoided?</b></p>								
	<b>Identified Characteristics</b>	<b>Reduce or avoid potential negative effects</b>							
		<p>We provide a range of minor and major adaptations to help you to remain living safely and independently in your home.</p>	<p>Where it is not reasonably practical to carry out the necessary adaptations to enable the tenant to live independently in their own home, we will support the tenant to find alternative accommodation which matches their housing requirement and need, making best use of existing stock.</p>	<p>We want the aids and adaptations process to be easily accessible and simple to follow. Customers and their representatives can request adaptations in several ways.</p>	<p>The assessment of an individual's need for adaptations remains the statutory duty of the local authority through its Community Occupational Therapy service with all staff being appropriately training to take into account diverse needs.</p>	<p>The Occupational Therapist will include on their referral a priority rating and we will use this to inform our delivery programme ensuring that the delivery programme is in line with the tenant's needs.</p>	<p>Once adaptations have been installed, we will maintain and repair these through the repairs and maintenance service to ensure they remain effective and in good working order.</p>	<p>We will develop a register of adapted properties so that, where possible, re-lets can be matched with tenants' individual needs. We use West Cheshire Homes to advertise our vacant lets with key features of the property including any available</p>	

								aids and adaptations being detailed in the property advert.
	<b>Neurodiversity</b>	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
	<b>Physical health</b>	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
<p><b>If potential positive effects have been identified, how can we ensure these are realised?</b></p>								

Identified Characteristics	Realise positive effects				
	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 the Council's Asset Management Strategy, having regard to investment and maintaining the long-term sustainability of the housing stock.	We will subsidise the cost of moving to a suitable property as follows: Assistance with decoration costs or some additional decoration to the property while it is vacant; Payment to cover removal costs. The extent of this assistance will be agreed with the tenant on a case-by-case basis.	Tenants have the right to challenge a refusal for adaptations. Such requests will be considered by the ForHousing Strategic Lead for Asset Management within 10 working days of receipt. Tenants also have the option to take advice from an independent source such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Law Centre or Solicitor.	We will develop a register of adapted properties so that, where possible, re-lets can be matched with tenants' individual needs.
<b>Neurodiversity</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Physical health</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p><b>How and when will the impacts of your activity or change be monitored moving forward?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The policy will be available to tenants on the website and all employees through the intranet.</li> <li>• The implementation and management of this policy will be carried out by the Asset Management Team (HMC).</li> <li>• If staff become aware that there are problems with effective operation of the policy or the associated procedures, they should report this to the policy owner. This feedback will be incorporated into the policy / procedural review process.</li> </ul>					

