

Policy	Housing Adaptations Policy
Users of Policy	CBC and CBH Officers
Date Adopted	1 November 2014
Date last Reviewed	
Review Frequency	Upon a relevant change of legislation, or in response to a change of relevant CBC Policy, in particular the Allocations Policy.
Scheme Delegation	
Formation of Policy	Portfolio Holder with delegated responsibility for Housing and the financial management of the Housing Revenue Account
Amendments	Portfolio Holder with delegated responsibility for Housing and the financial management of the Housing Revenue Account
Monitoring	Housing Client Coordinator
Implementation	Housing Client Coordinator
Approval of	The Council Representative delegated to the Director (Property Services)

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the criteria by which Colchester Borough Council will assess requests for adaptations to its properties.
- 1.2 An adaptation is where items are specially fitted to the property itself. This includes minor fittings as well as major alterations. This policy only covers adaptations to individual homes, it does not cover adaptations to communal areas.
- 1.3 The policy will also contribute to the Council's objective to make 'best use of stock' by ensuring that the best use of the Council's housing stock is considered, alongside the needs of the current tenant.
- 1.4 The policy aims to avoid the situation where adaptations will have to be removed in the future to ensure the property is let.

2.0 Legislation and Guidance

- 2.1 **The Equality Act 2010** The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination.
- 2.2 **The Allocations Policy** –identifies the banding structure for applicants on the housing register and the priority given to tenants who want to move to a smaller home.
- 2.3 **Giving permission as a landlord for adaptations which are self-funded, funded through a Disabled Facility Grant or other funding** sets out when the Council as a landlord will give permission for a

tenant to carry out adaptations to their home funded by a Disabled Facilities Grant or other funding.

- 2.4 **Mobility Scooter Policy**- sets out criteria for the provision of storage and charging facilities for tenants and leaseholders.
- 2.5 Tenants moving to a smaller property may be eligible for help and incentives under the **Transfer Incentive Scheme**.
- 2.6 Colchester Borough Council and Colchester Borough Homes are signatories to the **Armed Forces Community Covenant**.

3.0 The Policy

- 3.1 Adaptations are divided into three categories: minor works, planned works and major works.
- 3.2 Although an adaptation may be eligible for delivery under the policy, the Council may decide not to provide the adaptation if it is not considered 'reasonable and practical' to carry out the adaptations.
- 3.3 Adaptations have been prioritised to ensure that the best use is made of the funds available and that future suitability of the Council's housing stock is ensured.

3.4 Minor Works

3.4.1 Minor works include small fixed items such as:

- Grab rails
- Lever taps
- Electrical sockets
- Door entry systems
- Toilet surrounds
- Half steps
- Removal of thresholds
- Installation of a door call and entryphone system
- Installation of fluorescent lights if appropriate

3.4.2 Minor works will be processed if supported by an Essex County Council Occupational Therapist's request or evidence from a Doctor or other suitably qualified health professional. Some minor adaptations can be carried out by CBH at their discretion.

3.5 Planned works.

3.5.1 Planned works include such fixed items as:

- Stairlifts
- Ramps to access property

- Adapted kitchens
- Overbath shower
- Level access shower
- Dropped kerbs
- Widening garden paths
- Doors and window alteration to permit access
- Fixed heating appliance in place of an open fire or other solid fuel appliances

3.5.3 Requests for planned works must be supported by an Occupational Therapist's assessment. The person requiring adaptations must be the tenant, or their partner or immediate family who is permanently resident in the household or would be if the adaptation was done.

3.5.4 In addition to the Occupational Therapist's assessment, a consideration will also be made of the following criteria:

- Whether the adaptation work is reasonable and practicable having regard to the age and character of the property.
- How easily the Council could let the property with the adaptation in place if the current tenant no longer lived there or:
- If there are suitable alternative housing options available to meet the tenant's needs. This may include transferring to another property which is adapted or suitable for adaptation.

3.5.5 If a move is considered the most suitable option for the tenant, reference should be made to the current Allocations Policy for guidance.

3.5.6 If an adaptation results in a smaller number of bedrooms in the property, the property will still be classified for rental purposes as the original size. This is because upon vacation, the property may be converted back to the original configuration.

3.5.7 Some adaptations may result in an ongoing maintenance or other works. These may be recovered through the charging of a service charge to the tenant.

3.6 Major works

3.6.1 Major works are normally extensions to an existing property.

3.6.2 Requests for planned works must be supported by an Occupational Therapist's assessment. The person requiring adaptations must be the tenant, or their partner or immediate family who is permanently resident in the household or would be if the adaptation was done.

3.6.3 In addition to the Occupational Therapist's assessment, a consideration will also be made of the following criteria:

- Whether the adaptation work is reasonable and practicable having regard to the age and character of the property
 - How easily the Council could let the property with the extension in place if the current tenant no longer lived there or:
 - If there are suitable alternative housing options available to meet the tenant's needs. This may include transferring to another property.
- 3.6.4 If a move is considered the most suitable option for the tenant, reference should be made to the current Allocations Policy for guidance.
- 3.6.5 A limited number of extensions can be funded each year, therefore the first priority will be to look for other accommodation for the household.
- 3.6.6 Extensions that affect the value of the property and/or increase the number of bedrooms, will result in a re-calculation of the rent, which is likely to result in an increased weekly rent payable by tenants

4.0 Tenants ineligible for planned or major works

- 4.1 A tenant who has transferred or mutually exchanged from an adapted property which is suitable for their needs into an unadapted property will not be eligible under the Adaptations Policy for works unless there are overriding documented reasons for the move such as violence, domestic violence issues or pressing needs to move to an area to give or receive support.
- 4.2 Where there are substantial arrears and a possession order has been issued, with no payment plan being adhered to then the tenant may be refused an adaptation.
- 4.3 The Council will carefully consider whether to progress with an adaptation where proceedings have commenced against a tenant for breach of tenancy, or is under investigation for anti-social behaviour. The Council will consider all circumstances and may refuse the application.
- 4.4 If an application is made for adaptations for a child with disabilities, adaptation works will only be completed at the property of principal residence.
- 4.5 A customer who has declared themselves as needing a level access shower, but then chooses to move into a Council property without one will not be eligible under the Adaptations Policy for works unless there are overriding documented reasons for the move such as violence, domestic violence or pressing needs to move to an area to give or receive support. If a customer is downsizing from a larger family home to a smaller property, the Council will carefully consider the benefits and costs of adapting a second property to facilitate the move.

- 4.6 If a tenant who is under-occupying an adapted property suitable for their needs wants to transfer to a smaller property which is not adapted for their needs, the Council will carefully consider the benefits and costs of adapting a second property to facilitate the move. The Council may refuse the adaptation.

5.0 Ineligible adaptations

- 5.1 Non-fixed equipment will be funded through Social Services such as:
- Powered bath hoist
 - Non specialist shower or commode chair
 - Transfer boards
 - Specialist WC seat
 - Specialist furniture
 - Induction loops

6.0 Right to Buy applications

- 6.1 If a Right to Buy application is submitted while the client is waiting for adaptations, any planned works will not proceed further. However, minor works may still be considered. If the Right to Buy application is successful, the tenant may be able to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant to enable the adaptations after purchase.
- 6.2 If a Right to Buy application is submitted following the completion of adaptations, the value of the work will be taken into account for the valuation. The servicing and repair of any adaptation including stair lifts will no longer be the responsibility of the Council.

7.0 Priority

- 7.1 Approved planned and major works will be actioned in the order of date of receipt of recommendation from Social Services.
- 7.2 To make best use of the Council's stock the following adaptations will not be funded unless there are exceptional circumstances:
- Adapted kitchen where the member of the household with the disability is not the tenant or partner or adult dependent of the tenant or partner
 - Level access shower in a first or second floor flat, or under occupied three or four bedroomed property
 - Stairlifts for communal stairs (where stairs access two or more homes)

8.0 Appeals Procedure

- 8.1 Appeals in respect of how the policy has been applied, eligibility for an adaptation or the type of adaptation offered will be reviewed under Colchester Borough Homes' complaints procedure.

9.0 Service Standards

- 9.1 Acknowledgement of the application for an adaptation, including name and telephone number of the Officer dealing with the enquiry will be sent to the applicant– within 10 working days of receipt.
- 9.2 Minor works- actioned within 28 working days from the date the order for the work is issued.
- 9.3 Timescales for planned or major works will be advised when the scope of the work is agreed.

10.0 Monitoring and Review

- 10.1 Colchester Borough Homes will monitor our performance in meeting the Service Standards set out in this policy.
- 10.2 The policy will be reviewed upon a relevant change of legislation, or in response to a change of relevant CBC Policy, in particular the Allocations Policy.

11.0 Communicating the Policy to Staff

- 11.1 Managers and staff involved in the implementation of the policy will receive a copy of the policy.
- 11.2 Colchester Borough Homes will provide sufficient training to enable staff to understand and comply with the policy. This will happen one month of adoption of the policy and then on a regular basis.
- 11.3 A copy of the policy will be placed on the Council's internal web-site.
- 11.4 A copy of the policy will be available on Colchester Borough Homes' website.

12.0 Communicating the Policy to Customers

- 12.1 A leaflet providing details of the policy will be available to customers on the CBC and CBH website.

13.0 Scheme Delegation

Formation of Policy	Portfolio Holder with delegated responsibility for Housing and the financial management of the Housing Revenue Account
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