

Policy

Title: Aids and Adaptations

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Introduction

Following the formal review of Halton Housing's adaptation policy in 2013 this is the second policy document which formalises our need to continue to provide suitably adapted properties, which meet the needs of our disabled customers.

Halton Housing will maximise the effective use of its existing adapted housing stock whilst taking account of the needs of individual customers.

Halton Housing will provide ongoing maintenance of all existing aids and adaptations within its housing stock.

This policy will be implemented by:

- Customer Department
- Homes Department

Policy Statement

The purpose of adaptations is to modify the environment to enable the independent living of a customer and / or their family who has a permanent or substantial disability. It is not a primary matter of undertaking building work, providing equipment or modifying a dwelling, but providing a solution to the problems a customer is experiencing because of a disabling environment.

There is no legal requirement for registered providers to carry out adaptations. However, Halton Housing strives to provide reasonable housing that meets the needs of its customers who have a physical disability or are at risk in their home.

Existing Stock

The following should be considered when a referral for adaptation is raised:

- What are the specific needs of the customer?
- Are there any currently adapted properties that meet the customer's needs?
- Can the customer be nominated to registered provider (including out of borough) who may have an adapted property that meets their needs?
- Can the customer's needs be accommodated within an appropriate new build scheme?
- Can we actually accommodate the customers required adaptations?
- What is the expected usage of the adaptation?

We will:

- Prioritise rehousing to a more appropriate property rather than undertake major adaptations to a property that is not adapted
- Work closely with Halton Borough Council's Complex Care Team to find solutions that are appropriate to the customer and the property
- Install wet rooms rather than level access showers (ground floor properties only)
- Adapt only ground floor properties

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- Support customers to register on Property Pool Plus to facilitate a move to a suitably adapted property
 - Provide financial assistance, where appropriate, to facilitate a move to a suitability adapted property

We will not:

- Adapt properties that are under occupied
- Adapt properties where external access is problematic
- Adapt a property that would have a major impact on its future usability
- Adapt a property to accommodate a mobility scooter *
- Install a wet room to a property above ground level
- Install a new lift where a recycled one is suitable
- Install a curved stair lift
- Install a through floor lift
- Make adaptations exceeding £5,000 **
- Carryout a property extension

The above list is not exhaustive and it is subject to extenuating circumstances and the appeal process. Target time to complete Major adaptations is six months.

Halton Housing manages an Adaptations Waiting List, and adaptations are processed in strict date order.

** -This is due to the increased fire risk from overcharging and dioxide poisoning. Ramps will be installed for electric wheelchairs which have a stricter limitation on the quality of the device.*

*** - If the works required exceed £5,000 the following options can be explored:*

- *Appeal the decision not to carry out the adaptations*
- *Apply to rehoused to a suitably adapted property*
- *Apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant from Halton Borough Council*
- *Apply for charitable funding*

New Build

Our new build portfolio comprises of a number of specialist type schemes such as extra care, supported housing, etc. These are specially designed, in conjunction with our partners via a project team, to meet the following criteria:

- Lifetime homes standards
- Designed for families with specific needs
- Customer on our waiting list with specialist needs

When requested to provide adaptations to new build individual properties or purpose-built properties, the above existing stock guidance will apply along with the following:

- Approval will be sought from the Head of Asset and Compliance
- Approval will only be given when the full costs (labour, works and equipment) have been included in the overall appraisal for the scheme
- Sufficient match funding must be identified (preferably 100%)
- Bespoke properties will only be provided where they can be converted back into general needs properties. The additional design and upfront work cost (for

the subsequent conversion) must be included in the appraisal costs prior to approval

Right to Review

- Customers have the right to request a review
- The request can be made in person, by telephone, by email or in writing
- It must be received within 21 days of the date of the original decision

Management responsibility for this policy lies with the Housing Options Manager.

Day to day implementation of this policy lies with the Housing Options Gateway Advisor and the Housing Options Gateway Assessor.

Regulatory and/or Legal Compliance

This aids and adaptation policy is compatible with the following legislation:

- Housing Act 1985 (as amended by Housing Act 1996)
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Equality Act 2010

The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England states:

Repairs and maintenance

- Registered providers shall ensure a prudent, planned approach to repairs and maintenance of homes and communal areas. This should demonstrate an appropriate balance of planned responsive repairs and value for money. The approach should include responsive and cyclical repairs, planned and capital works, work on empty properties and adaptations.
- Registered providers shall co-operate with relevant organisations to provide an adaptations service that meets tenants' needs.

Diversity Considerations

An initial screening checklist has been completed on this policy, which confirms that a full Equality Impact Assessment does not need to be completed.

Links to Strategies, Policies and Associated Documents

This policy underpins the following priorities within Our Direction OD3 document:

- Customer Focus

Other documents associated with this policy:

- Property Pool Plus Allocations Policy
- Transfer Policy
- Assignment and Mutual Exchange Policy
- Safeguarding Policy