

# Crawley Homes

## Disabled Adaptations Policy



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### 3. Policy Aims

The primary aim of the Adaptations Service is to enable the Council, within the financial and legislative constraints applicable to social housing, to identify housing solutions which best meet the assessed needs of residents with disabilities.

This policy supports the best use of financial resources and property assets. This may result in adaptations being declined where the assessed needs cannot be met within the residents' current home either because of the financial cost involved, a potentially detrimental impact on the future use of the property, the practical difficulties of adapting the property and the availability of alternative solutions which may include the allocation of more suitable housing.

Adaptations will not be carried out where it is considered reasonable for a resident to move to a more suitable Council property and where there is a reasonable expectation that this accommodation will become available within a period of 12 months from the date at which CBC is made aware of the residents assessed needs.

The policy will also guide Occupational Therapists (OT) and other professionals to understand what the Council will and will not be able to assist with in terms of adaptation to a resident's home.

CBC aim to operate a service that offers suitable, practical and cost-effective solutions that best meet residents' assessed needs.

The key principles of this policy are to:

- provide a seamless service that puts residents at the heart of the process
- offer a range of options for residents that are both achievable and realistic
- find the best possible solution for residents to meet their individual needs
- operate legally and according to best practice
- operate within the available budget and provide value for money
- minimise waiting lists and waiting times
- measure the impact of this policy in terms of real outcomes
- work with the Council's allocations teams to make best use of the housing stock (property assets)

Under this policy CBC will consider solutions that best meet the long-term needs of residents and their families as a primary objective, ensuring their safety, well-being and quality of life.

The Council aims to ensure that no resident waits longer than 12 months for a 'Major' adaptation and 3 months for a 'Minor' adaptation to be progressed.

#### **4. 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.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty on a public authority, where it must in the exercise of its functions, have due regard for the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality. Necessary and Appropriate, Reasonable and Practicable Works Section 24 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 places a duty on housing authorities who are not themselves a social services authority to consult the relevant social services authority and to satisfy themselves that the works are reasonable and practicable having regard to the age and condition of the property.

Assessments are completed by Occupational Therapists (OT's) in line with their good practice guide and a referral is submitted to CBC detailing the nature of the work required. Each case will be individually assessed on its own merits and CBC will decide what is reasonable taking account of the need to make housing available to a wide range of people in need, over the long term.

It is not considered reasonable to carry out adaptations that require structural alteration to the property (beyond that of widening door openings, removal of non-load bearing internal walls and forming openings less than 1.2m wide in floors and walls), involve alterations to the common parts of blocks of flats that will impact the use of these areas by residents of the block, require alterations to services that are communal to any block of flats (with the exception of door entry systems), involve the installation of flush floor showers and wet rooms to flats above the ground floor of a block of flats, limit the future use of family housing to households with disabilities. CBC will support such families to move to suitable accommodation.

#### **5. Adaptation Process Overview**

For adaptation work to be carried out, residents must request a referral to an OT approved by WSCC Social Services. The OT will assess the level of disability need and a referral must be sent to CBC to be processed. This referral and any supporting information must be sent by a secure method of communication taking account of the requirements of the GDPR legislation. Where information is communicated electronically this must be password protected. In some cases, the OT will request a joint visit with CBC in order to consider the feasibility of a proposal they may wish to recommend.

CBC will categorise assessments as follows:

**Minor Adaptations – works of up to £1,500** such as hand/grab rails, half steps, lever taps, window winder and widen internal doors are progressed in referral date order within 3 months

**General Adaptations – works over £1,500** such as wet area shower, over bath shower, stairlifts, ramps and level access entrance doors are progressed in referral date order within 3 months

**Major Adaptations – Works over £5,000** Extensions, conversions, Driveway& drop kerbs etc.

Hospital Discharge Works – Essential Urgent works up to £3,000 to allow an expedient discharge from Hospital

Performance of the contractor will be monitored through customer satisfaction surveys and post-inspections to ensure CBC meets its performance targets.

Adaptation budgets and waiting lists will be reviewed monthly with the WSCC OT service and reported quarterly to management.

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Where a resident or their family is deemed to be under occupying.

Where a resident or their family are overcrowding and there is every likelihood that they would be rehoused in a suitable alternative property within 24 months (except in exceptional circumstances).

Where they are waiting for a transfer to another property or are in the process of undertaking a mutual exchange.

Where the adaptation is unreasonable (indicative examples: the cost of the adaptation is abnormally expensive, structural alterations beyond those previously d





## **10. Limitations**

It is recognised that residents with disabilities will sometimes require very specific, tailored solutions to meet their needs. Any adaptation work will therefore only be undertaken after careful consideration of various factors including:

- The current and future needs of the resident(s) and their household
- The individual resident's level of disability
- Professional assessment/recommendations of healthcare professionals
- Characteristics of the dwelling, its construction and internal arrangement
- Planning and building regulation requirements and legislation
- Budget provision and long-term property asset implications
- The most cost-effective means of achieving the required outcome
- Alternative solutions to address assessed needs
- Impact upon other residents and the common areas
- Fire, health and safety legislation

## **11. Under-Occupancy / Tenancy Information**

Where a resident is under-occupying a property the adaptation requests will be refused unless exceptional circumstances prevail.

Where a resident is under-occupying a property, the Council will consider the practicalities and cost involved in adapting the under-occupied property and its future use against the potential benefits to the resident and the Council of moving them to a suitable smaller home.

Our primary aim is to ensure residents are housed in the most appropriate home to meet their needs. Secondary aims are to ensure budgets are spent effectively and that the long-term benefits derived from the housing stock is preserved for future use.

Where the Council feel a resident's needs are best met by moving to a smaller suitable home, our overarching concern will always be to consider the wider impact of a potential move on the resident's well-being and continuity of care. This will be judged on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with the OT.

Where a resident is under-occupying but has a medical need for a spare room subsidy, CBC will consider the adaptations providing the property is suitable to be adapted. Evidence of the medical need must be provided.

## Overcrowding

Where a resident and their household are deemed to be overcrowded any referral for additional space, for example an extra bedroom, will not be deemed a valid adaptation on the grounds of social overcrowding. This will be classed as a Housing Needs issue and will be referred to the housing options team to help the resident find a more suitable property to meet that need.

## End of tenancy

Major adaptations will not be carried out where eviction action is pending or where the tenancy will not, or is not likely to continue, beyond a period of 12 months from the date upon which the recommended adaptation is received by CBC. This is to ensure that adaptations are not carried out at a property if the resident that needs the adaptation is going to be moving.

## Right-to-buy

CBC will not carry out adaptations to properties that are going through the right-to-buy process. Any adaptation may be progressed by applying for adaptations through the DFG. If a resident is completing a right-to-buy application, it should be noted that the sale and value of a property will be affected if major adaptations have already been carried out.

## Suitability of property for adaptation

In some cases, a property may not be suitable for adaptation due to the



## Communal areas and flatted accommodation

CBC recognises that where works are both essential and reasonably practical, we shall consider essential access requirements to the common areas of blocks of flats and estates. Such proposals may require the consent of other residents and must not impair or compromise other residents' safety and will therefore be risk assessed on a case-by-case basis.

### Stair lifts in communal areas of blocks of flats

CBC will not authorise the installation of a stair lift in a communal staircase in a block of flats or the shared common areas of property. This is due to the increased risk of an impeded exit, to the disabled person, other users of the building and the emergency services.

### Access and Egress

Suitable access will be considered for the main front door and/or existing rear door(s) to a property, where reasonable and practical. If this is not viable the most economical provision will be explored, which may include other adaptations such as changing windows to doors. This will be at the discretion of CBC in conjunction with the OT.

## **17. Referrals relating to behaviour**

It is appreciated that where a resident has challenging behaviour as a result of their disability it can cause difficulties and put additional strain on the resident, their family and neighbours.

Sometimes in these circumstances additional space or specialist facilities and equipment are recommended.

If a resident is unable to share a bedroom for reasons of privacy, safety or due to a medical condition that affects their behaviour, and adequate additional space could be provided within the property by converting the existing property or space within it that would meet their assessed need this will be considered before considering an extension.

For other referrals relating to behaviour, CBC will work with the OT to consider the best solution and only carry out an adaptation where there is a genuine medical need that satisfies the requirements of this policy, and only when all alternative options have been exhausted.

18.

Provide CBC with any relevant certificates of the work upon completion

## **21. Performance Monitoring**

CBC recognise the importance of working in partnership with residents and stakeholders to develop and continually improve our services and raise standards.

To demonstrate this CBC is committed to:

Monitoring completed adaptations through the use of customer satisfaction surveys; to ensure we maintain performance and help inform future service improvements

Publishing information in relation to CBC performance against the aims and

Monitoring of performance and satisfaction with the adaptations service will be used to inform any future policy review in this area. All reviews will consider whether:

The current policy adheres to legislative and regulatory requirements, and reflects good practice

The aims and objectives of the policy are being met

The current policy outcomes meet the needs and requirements of our customer base

Service users are aware and understand the policy and believe it to be fair and consistent

The service offers value for money

Overall monitoring and review of this policy will be undertaken in consultation with staff, resident groups, the WSCC Occupational Therapy Service and other relevant partners and stakeholders.

**Crawley Borough Council**

**Last Update April 2022**

(Next review date - March 2025)