

Dover District Council

Disabled Adaptations Policy

Summarised
Version



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Dover District Council (the “Council”) is a stock owning Local Authority with a Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The Council understands the importance of allocating homes to make best use of its housing stock, however where there is not a readily available property which meets the disabled tenant or disabled household member’s needs or they become disabled or their needs change, the Council will apply this Policy.
- 1.2 The Council will use its HRA to fund disabled adaptations to its own properties, non-Council tenants can apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant, or other grants and loans are available.

2. What is the purpose of this Policy?

- 2.1 The purpose of this Policy is to set out how the Council will oversee disabled adaptations requested and/or made to its properties.

3. Who does this Policy apply to?

- 3.1 The Policy applies to Council tenants (an individual or individuals who have an active tenancy agreement and are renting and living in a Council owned property) who are applying for an adaptation on behalf of themselves or a household member who is disabled.
- 3.2 Other residents can refer to [Private Sector Housing Grants and Loans](#).

4. The Policy principles

- 4.1 We are committed to the following principles when assessing an application for a disabled adaptation:
 - 1) Supporting residents with disabilities to live independently by offering necessary and appropriate adaptations to meet the needs of the disabled person.
 - 2) Help to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for residents.
 - 3) Providing a prompt and efficient service for completing adaptations to meet the residents’ needs in a timely manner.
 - 4) Sensitivity and empathy to the diverse needs of residents who are recognised as having a disability.

5. What is a disability and adaptation?

- 5.1 For the purposes of this Policy and in accordance with legislation, a person is disabled if:
- their sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired,
 - they have a mental disorder or impairment of any kind, or
 - they are physically substantially disabled by illness, injury or impairment.
- 5.2 A person over 18 is disabled if:
- they are registered under section 77(1) or (3) of the Care Act 2014, or
 - in the opinion of the social services authority the person falls with a category mentioned in section 77(4) of that Act
- A person under the age of 18 is disabled if:
- they are registered under paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989, or
 - in the opinion of the social services authority, they are a disabled child for the purposes of Part III of the Children Act 1989
- 5.3 Home adaptations refer to changes made to the fabric and fixtures of a home to make it safer and easier to get around and to use for everyday tasks like cooking and bathing.

6. Referral process and eligibility

- 6.1 If a tenant or household member is disabled as per the above definition and requires a home adaptation, they must request a referral from an Occupational Therapist (OT) approved by KCC Social Services: [Care needs assessments - Kent County Council](#).
- 6.2 The following criteria must apply:
- The disabled person must intend to live in the dwelling as their only or main residence for 5 years or for such shorter period as their health and other relevant circumstances permit.
 - The disabled person must need an adaptation(s) to meet one or more of these purposes (each purpose will be considered individually):
 - Facilitating access to the home and garden
 - Making the premises safer
 - Access to the principal family room or bedroom
 - Access to a toilet
 - Access to a bath or shower
 - Access to a wash hand basin
 - Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food
 - Better heating
 - Control of power, light and heat
 - Caring for others
 - An application can be made to fund adaptations to common parts of buildings containing one or more flats

- 6.3 Where one or more purposes are identified, we will follow recommendations from the OT regarding what is necessary and appropriate and then consider what is reasonable and practicable having regard to the age and condition of the property (i.e. limitations of the existing construction and layout of the property).

Examples of works we will carry out

- 6.4 Examples of one or more relevant works we can carry out include, but is not limited to:
- Installation of grab rails in various locations throughout a property
 - Installation of access steps/ramps to front and/or rear entrances
 - Additional internal banister rails
 - Additional external handrails
 - Installation of lever taps
 - Alterations to the height of electrical sockets and switches
 - Fixed aids for visual and hearing impairment (doorbells/fire alarms/smoke detectors)
 - Specialist equipment such as wash / dry toilets
 - Level access shower facilities
 - Over bath shower facilities
 - Stairlifts
 - Through floor lifts
 - Kitchen adaptations
 - Extensions

Adaptation categories

- 6.5 We will categorise assessments as minor adaptations or major adaptations, the former includes works of £1,000 or less (or stairlifts) and the latter are works over £1,000 which typically reflects the structural changes required.
- 6.6 We will work in accordance with the below target timescales which are applicable from the Council's receipt of referral from the OT:
- Minor adaptations: 55 working days.
 - Major adaptations: 130 working days.
- 6.7 We will follow advice from the OT to establish whether the works are urgent, cases are likely to be urgent in the following circumstances:
- Coming out of hospital and at risk
 - Living alone and at risk
 - Severe cognitive dysfunction and at risk
 - Living with a carer who is elderly or disabled
 - Living without heating or hot water and at risk
 - Limited life expectancy

Non-eligible works and circumstances we may refuse to undertake an adaptation

6.8 Examples of possible refusals include but are not limited to:

- Removing substantial/major adaptations
- Where there would be fire, health and safety implications
- Occupation intention not being met, namely:
 - Possession action has been initiated
 - Where they are waiting for transfer to another property
 - Where the property is used for temporary accommodation
 - Properties upon which a Right to Buy application has been received.
 - Where health and social services are responsible, namely:
 - Provision of appliances and portable specialist equipment
 - Equipment which can be installed and removed with little or no structural modification of the dwelling

Maintenance of equipment

- 6.9 Most equipment, such as lifts, can be added to the Councils' servicing and maintenance contract, after the initial warranty has expired.
- 6.10 Other equipment such as specialist baths and specialist WC's may have individual ongoing maintenance and repair contracts with the original installer. Residents can check this with their OT.
- 6.11 In all cases, we will not be held responsible for any adaptations or equipment that have failed due to misuse, neglect or the resident failing to undertake a reasonably expected level of care of any adaptations or equipment.

Communication

- 6.12 We will provide tenants with our written decision and where an adaptation is refused, we will provide our reasons why and we can provide information on other options available to the tenant.
- 6.13 We recognise the importance of communicating with tenants and we will endeavour to:
- Provide clear information to tenants, with an aim for a single point of contact.
 - Contact tenants to confirm approval of recommended adaptations; when the work will be carried out, or that there is a waiting list.
 - Inform tenants and explain if recommended adaptations have been refused.
 - Consult in person with tenants regarding major works and explain the scope of the works and how long it will take to complete.
 - Where appropriate, provide tenants with colour choices (e.g. for major bathroom adaptations – paint, tiles, flooring etc.).
 - Work with OTs on individual cases to ensure the most timely and cost-effective options are considered.
 - We will inform the tenant of who will be carrying out the works.

7. Complaints

- 7.1 All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy and procedures. More information about how you can make a complaint can be found on our website: [If you are unhappy](#)

8. Equality, diversity, and inclusion

- 8.1 We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and to eliminating unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, belief, financial status, and any other difference that can lead to discrimination or unfair treatment considering the principles of the Equality Act 2010. Please see our [Equality Policy](#) for more details.
- 8.2 A full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was conducted for this policy in accordance with our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) when carrying out our duties (s149 of Equality Act 2010). Where potential negative impacts to individuals with protected characteristics have been identified, mitigations have been put in place to reduce the impacts.

