

Aids and Adaptations Policy

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Owner: Asset and Repairs	Next Scheduled Review: 03/06/2029

1. Scope

- 1.1 This policy sets out Flint Housing's approach to managing adaptation requests and supporting residents to remain independent in their properties through reasonable adjustments where they, or a household member, have a disability or impaired mobility.
- 1.2 For the purposes of this Policy, any reference to Flint Housing or "our" or "we" shall be relevant to all its associated entities and administered, where applicable, by its housing management provider(s).
- 1.3 This policy applies to all Flint Housing tenants and does not apply to shared owners and leaseholders. Shared owners and leaseholders will need to obtain permission for any alterations they may need to make in the property.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 To set out our approach to the provision of adaptations in our properties and our intention to support the wellbeing and independence of our residents, either in continued occupancy of their own property or in another property that is suitably adapted or that can be adapted to meet their needs.
- 2.2 The purpose is to ensure consistency, clarity and fairness in our approach when dealing with requests for adaptations in our properties.
- 2.3 To work with Local Authority Partners to ensure any adapted properties are and continue to be allocated to suitable households. Where a tenancy within an adapted property has ended, we will work together with the Local Authority to allocate the property to someone who will fully benefit from those features. Our decisions will focus on making best possible use of our existing portfolio.
- 2.4 As a provider of new-build affordable housing, Flint Housing will seek to engage with the relevant Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Team, wherever practicable, to fund and complete any major adaptations as part of the build before Practical Completion to minimise disruption, reduce void periods and avoid affecting the defects liability period.

3. Key terms and definitions

- 3.1 Adaptations are alterations or additions to any aspect of a property to make it easier or safer for use by a person with a disability.
 - 3.2 A person is formally defined as having a disability under the Equality Act 2010 if they have a 'physical or mental impairment', and 'the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on (the person's) ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'
 - 3.3 A person may be eligible for funding to make adaptations if they are not registered as disabled, upon recommendation by an Occupational Therapist.
 - 3.4 Other eligibility criteria which apply to this policy are:
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- Applicants must be a named tenant on our Tenancy Agreement or registered on our records as part of the tenant's household and living at the property on a permanent basis. If they are aged over 18 years, they should also be registered on the Council Tax records and/or electoral roll for that address. Individuals who have no recourse to public funds or do not have the right to rent may not be eligible for assistance under the terms of this policy.
- Applicants who are registered for a transfer or mutual exchange will each be considered on their individual merit. This will include whether the applicant is requesting to move into a property which is not suitable or less suitable for their needs, in which case they may not be eligible for assistance under this policy.
- We will only consider the cost for adaptations to properties where Flint Housing are the beneficial owner.
- Tenants who are applying for works to their current property and are also registered for a transfer or mutual exchange to another property would need to withdraw their application to move before works will be carried out on their current property.
- We will not usually carry out adaptations for persons transferring from another social landlord to one of our properties unless their circumstances have changed significantly after they became our tenant.

3.5 Adaptations are categorised as follows:

Category	Definition	Examples
Minor	£0-500	Grab rail Lever taps Half steps Stair rails
Significant	>£500	Simple ramps Door widenings Door threshold changes
Complex	Includes where external factors impact on completion or specialist works required irrespective of value	Level access showers Adapted kitchens Stair lifts and hoists Through floor lifts External ramps Shower room/bedroom extensions Specialist equipment

4. Policy

4.1 Adaptations will only be undertaken on tenanted properties or in communal areas for the benefit of our tenants and/or family members living in their property. Adaptations will not be carried out in any property, where:

- There is a Right to Acquire Application with a live status
 - There is a severe tenancy breach
 - The layout and/or location of the current property make it unsuitable
 - The works would negatively affect our ability to let the property in future
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- The applicant is under or over occupying and they can apply for suitable alternative accommodation
 - The works would not resolve the issue for the long-term or make a significant improvement to the current situation
- 4.2 Where Flint Housing does not own the communal areas, any required consent from the freeholder will be sought by Flint Housing on the tenant's behalf before the works are undertaken.
- 4.3 Where disposal of a property is under consideration, applications for adaptations will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

5. Response to requests – What to expect

- 5.1 Residents may request an adaptation directly or through an advocate, representative, family member, support worker, health professional, Occupational Therapist or Local Authority partner, with consent where required. An Occupational Therapist assessment is required for all minor and significant adaptation requests.
- 5.2 We will provide clear and accessible information about how to request an adaptation, what information may be needed, how decisions are made and the likely stages of the process.
- 5.3 We will acknowledge requests, explain next steps and keep residents informed at key stages of the case.
- 5.4 Adaptation requests will be prioritised on a proportionate and risk-based basis, taking account of assessed need, safety, dignity, independence, professional recommendations and the impact of delay.
- 5.5 Higher priority may be given where there is urgent need, including hospital discharge, terminal illness, rapidly deteriorating conditions, safeguarding concerns, significant mobility restrictions, or inability to access essential facilities within the property.
- 5.6 Where an adaptation cannot reasonably be delivered within a timescale that meets the assessed need, Flint Housing will consider interim measures, alternative solutions or rehousing options with the resident and relevant partner agencies
- 5.7 We will make reasonable adjustments to communication, appointments, visits, information-sharing, case management and complaint handling where needed to ensure fair access to the service.
- 5.8 Decisions under this policy will be based on the individual circumstances of the case, taking account of assessed need, property suitability, professional advice, likely benefit, value for money, and whether the proposed works are reasonable and practicable, are of good quality, meet the needs and aspirations of tenants and minimise future maintenance costs.
- 5.9 Where a requested adaptation cannot be approved, Flint Housing will consider whether an alternative solution, interim measure or more suitable property would better meet the assessed need. Decisions will be evidence-based, proportionate and clearly recorded, including the reasons for approval, refusal, deferral or alternative recommendation.
- 5.10 Where a request is refused, amended, deferred or redirected to rehousing, the resident may ask Flint Housing to review the decision.
- 5.11 Reviews will, where practicable, be undertaken by a senior manager not involved in the original decision.
- 5.12 The resident will be informed of the review outcome and reasons in a clear and accessible format.
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- 5.13 Flint Housing will maintain appropriate records of adaptation requests, assessments, decisions, completed works. Where adaptation works are completed, relevant property records will be updated to support future lettings, repairs, servicing and asset management.
- 5.14 We will actively seek to understand any specific needs in respect of adaptations to ensure that the correct standard and type of property is offered. We will not offer a tenancy if a property is unsuitable or if it cannot be adapted reasonably and practically to meet the needs of the proposed new tenant. If the estimated costs are over £1000, works will not usually be agreed for new tenants, including those from another social landlord. In exceptional cases the decision may be made in consultation with the relevant partners.
- 5.15 Where medical information in support of any adaptations is received, appropriate information and advice may be sought from an independent medical specialist before we decide whether to fund the requested works or consider other options.
- 5.16 In exceptional circumstances we may consider a management move. A management move will only be considered where:
- a) Our tenant is registered with a Local Authority and has been awarded a medical priority
 - b) They have been bidding for other suitable properties but have been unsuccessful
 - c) An adapted property or a property suitable for adaptation becomes available and the cost of works is less than adaptations to their current property.
- 5.17 A direct offer may also be considered where a Flint Housing tenant who occupies an adapted property no longer requires such features, and the property would be better suited to others e.g. where the person requiring the adaptations no longer lives in the property.
- 5.18 Where a direct offer is agreed we will make one suitable offer only. If a suitable offer is refused no further direct offer will be considered unless there is a significant change in circumstances.
- 5.19 If an applicant is subsequently successful in bidding for another property that requires adaptations, we may not agree to fund the work if the cost is greater than those required at the property they refused.
- 5.20 Where there is urgent need, Flint Housing will usually arrange minor adaptations through its responsive repairs service, subject to recommendation by a qualified Occupational Therapist. Approved works will be completed within timescales proportionate to the nature and complexity of the works.
- 5.21 If we do not consider the proposed adaptation works to be reasonable, practicable or to provide value for money, or if necessary permissions cannot be obtained, we will discuss alternative solutions with the resident, which may include a move to more suitable accommodation. Where relevant, we will support the resident to pursue rehousing through the appropriate Local Authority allocations process.
- 5.22 Assessment for most adaptations is undertaken by the relevant Local Authority Occupational Therapy Team or specialist services. The Occupational Therapist will advise if priority needs to be given due to individual circumstances.
- 5.23 We will recycle major adaptations wherever possible, including stair lifts, wash and dry toilets and modular ramps, etc.
- 5.24 We store information about adaptations on our housing management system. In the event of requests for housing from disabled applicants, we endeavour to assess their needs by undertaking a visit to the property with them.
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- 5.25 We are responsible for the maintenance and replacement of all the equipment our contractors install, unless we agree otherwise with the tenant and the Local Authorities Social Services. We will only replace equipment where:
- a) the equipment requires it; and
 - b) the tenant for whom the property was originally adapted is still living in the property
- 5.26 Some minor works adaptations are undertaken by Local Authority Occupational Therapy Service in line with the division of responsibility guidance between the Council and local housing authorities. We record all third-party contractor installations on our housing management system apart from minor works such as internal grab rails and ensure compliance. If a third-party installation triggers an ongoing compliance or servicing issue, evidence that this is occurring should be provided to Flint Housing.
- 5.27 We will work with other providers of equipment to ensure that relevant works are properly undertaken and that where necessary appropriate certification is provided and that our property records are kept up to date. Works approval must be granted before any works are undertaken on our properties.
- 5.28 Any offer made and work undertaken will be subject to confirming that the property is suitable. The tenant will be expected to sign their new tenancy agreement for the property before works commence.
- 5.29 Requests for adaptations will be approved by the Director of Delivery and Asset Management.

6. Legislation and regulation

- 6.1 This policy should also be read alongside Flint Housing's complaints policy, equality and diversity policy, lettings or allocations policy, safeguarding policy and any associated procedures relating to reasonable adjustments, asset management and data handling.
- 6.2 This policy has been developed using the following:
- Equality Act 2010
 - Care Act 2014
 - Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
 - RSH Consumer Standards
- Delivery Housing Adaptations for Disabled People- a good practical guide (2006)

7. Equality and Diversity

- 7.1 Flint Housing is committed to ensuring that all services are accessible to all residents. We will ensure that our staff, or where applicable our housing management provider, communicate appropriately with residents and have access to the information needed to support delivery of this policy.
- 7.2 This policy will be applied fairly and with respect for all residents. We recognise our duty to advance equality of opportunity and to prevent discrimination or victimisation on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, and any other protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.
- 7.3 We recognise that some protected groups may be disproportionately affected and will take reasonable steps in applying this policy to meet individual needs and comply with the Equality Act 2010. For example, we may:
- 7.3.1 tailor our response to individual circumstances;
 - 7.3.2 provide support to residents who may have difficulty understanding this policy;
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- 7.3.3 provide information, where reasonably requested, in other languages or accessible formats such as Braille, large print or audio; and
- 7.3.4 ensure these arrangements are delivered by Flint Housing or, where applicable, by our housing management provider on our behalf.

8. Monitoring and continuous improvement

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years, unless earlier review is required due to legislative, business or sector changes, or where resident or stakeholder feedback, complaints, or independent findings identify issues with the policy. This will ensure it continues to meet its stated objectives and reflects good practice developments.
 - 8.2 Flint Housing will use feedback from residents, complaints, compliments, case reviews and engagement activity to improve this policy. Monitoring information will be used to identify themes, address barriers to access and inform future policy review.
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