



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
PARTNERSHIP HOMES**

ADAPTATIONS POLICY

2024-2026

Version 1

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1. INTRODUCTION

NPH is committed to providing a high quality adaptations service to enable residents to live with reduced risk, maintain or improve their independence, with dignity and well-being within their homes, through efficient management of resources and funding.

This policy applies to service that Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH) provide on behalf of West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) tenants who require adaptations within their home. Procedures are in place to support the implementation of this policy for tenants within NPH managed properties. Undertaking adaptations is a key service area within NPH's Management Agreement with WNC.

This service aims to enable our more vulnerable tenants to have access and use of their home by enabling them to live in a reduced risk environment, maintaining or improving their independence, with dignity and well-being by assessing their needs. I think we need to clarify that the service can also be for other members of the tenants household too i.e. children

This is achieved by providing adaptations that are appropriate for their needs and the property. If adaptations cannot be achieved we will support the tenant and provide recommendations for alternative housing when appropriate.

Adaptations team are not a responsive service to meet emergency short term health needs and operate under an assessment process for long term chronic health conditions.

This policy does not cover the residents of the Ecton Lane traveller site as any adaptations needs and requests are the responsibility of WNC

Purpose of Policy

- To set out the criteria by which NPH will assess all requests for adaptation work and identify any limitations to the service.
- To get the best value for money (VFM) at all times.
- To manage the expectations of residents who desire adaptations with NPH's duty to manage its housing stock effectively through the Asset Management Strategy.
- To comply with legal and statutory requirements in relation to the provision of disabled adaptations.

2. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Equality Act 2010 is the key legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and to advance equality of opportunity for all. It simplifies and strengthens previous legislation and delivers a simple, modern framework to protect individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society. For further details please see NPH Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy which can be found on the intranet.

Protected characteristics: The Equality Act seeks to outlaw unlawful discrimination against a person, or group of people, because of:

- Race
- Sex
- Sexual orientation (whether being lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual)
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Gender reassignment (where someone has changed, is changing or has proposed changing their sex.
- Being pregnant or having just had a baby
- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Age

We want to ensure that everyone has an equal chance to access homes, services, jobs and contracts regardless of their age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic or national origin, nationality, colour, religion or belief, sexual orientation, caste and other irrelevant factors such as size or appearance.

Equality and diversity aims will further our vision of providing homes which **‘enable people to live happy and healthy lives in enriched communities’** and the mission to **‘provide services which endeavor to meet the needs and aspirations of all tenants and residents’**.

Promoting equality and diversity are fundamental to our values of **‘listening and responding’** and **‘achieving more with others’**. Making fairness and inclusion structural to everything helps us to comply with relevant legislation, Codes of Practice and reflect good practice. We aim to pro-actively tackle unfair disadvantage and unlawful discrimination.

3. ADAPTATIONS POLICY STATEMENT

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:

- A **home adaptation** is a modification of an individual's home to enable where possible independent living and reduce risk
- The **Disability Discrimination Act 1995** defines a **disabled person** as:
'Someone with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long- term adverse effect on his / her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.'
- Adaptations are defined as **minor** and **major**. These distinctions are based on the nature of the work required in order to implement the adaptation and do not correspond to the impact the adaptation will have on the individual requiring such work. It is understood that both minor and major adaptation work can impact significantly on an individual's quality of life.

The following are Examples of both minor and major adaptations, however the list is not exhaustive:

Minor adaptations

- Grab rails
- Half step
- Mopstick rails
- Drop down rails

Major adaptations

- Stair lifts
- Level access showers
- Ramped access
- Hoists

- Specialist adaptations and property extensions are considered by an adaptations panel and subject to approval from management team. This is once the assessment has been completed and recommendation is presented with full details of need. *Refer to section 4. Financial and feasibility considerations pg6*

4. FINANCIAL AND FEASIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Adaptation works are subject to a needs assessment as NPH are committed to delivering adaptations on a needs basis and utilising budget funding correctly with focus on value for money through budget requirements.

All major adaptations work undertaken by NPH will only be carried out following an assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT) to determine both immediate and long term medical needs. Is it possible to give a timescale or service standard for this?

NPH will also work with Social Services and other stakeholders to ensure timely and accurate information is collated and to ensure a coordinated approach to communicating with residents.

The OT's assessment will determine the urgency of the adaptation work required. Whilst guided by this, NPH will also work to ensure a balance between both priority need and time spent on the waiting list.

There may be exceptional cases when:

- The resident's circumstances are of a particularly complex nature
- The nature of the works will be very disruptive
- The nature of the works will have a very significant impact on the property itself; which may limit re-letting to other households in the future)

Adaptations over £10,000 will be subject to an options appraisal to ensure an adaptation is the best option available.

- A 'Whole Company Approach' (in line with NPH's Asset Management Strategy) will be undertaken with the Lettings, Housing Management and Asset Management Teams working together to consider other options including availability and suitability of alternative existing and pipeline new build properties.
- Some residents in need of adaptations may also be eligible to apply for other sources of funding, for example ex-forces personnel. NPH will make the most of any opportunity to 'lever' additional investment to make best use of the resources available.

In these cases, there will be a feasibility assessment to establish:

- Whether the tenant is able to move to alternative accommodation whilst the works are underway
- How the implications of challenges regarding re-letting in the future can be mitigated.

5. EXCLUSIONS

Unless there is an urgent health and safety need, NPH is unlikely to complete major adaptations to homes when a tenant has:

- an active transfer that is not as a result of an unmet adaptation need

- is seeking a move to another property such as a mutual exchange
- has submitted an application under Right To Buy

Housing has discretion to refuse adaptations in the following circumstances

- fraudulent claims
- breach of tenancy
- notice has been served
- under occupying by 2 bedrooms or more
- mutual exchange less than 12 months
- Couples who need separate bedrooms for medical reasons will not be adversely affected by this rule and NPH will seek advice from medical professionals in such cases.
- Adapting property for an occupier living within the property for less than 12 months, with exception to children

The above are examples of circumstances but is not an exhaustive list

Where under-occupying occurs, and a tenant requires adaptations to meet their needs NPH will recommend tenants apply for a transfer to a more suitable property and be eligible for the downsizing scheme.

Any applications made will be considered in line with the Allocations Policy and the appropriate priority awarded. Mobility labels will be attached to the application ensuring that those cases will take priority on the shortlist. Although properties are allocated via Choice Based Lettings, on occasion direct allocations will be made to ensure best use of the housing stock.

Where it has been identified that a move to a more suitable property is both reasonable and practicable, the OT will be consulted on the suitability of the proposed home. Options for re-housing will be limited. If a property is identified and it meets the tenant's needs, further properties will not be continually offered. If tenants choose to decline suitable properties to meet their long term needs and withdraw transfer applications NPH will not be obliged to adapt their current home.

6. COMPLETED ADAPTATION WORKS

All adaptations work completed to a property will be recorded as part of the property details. Wherever practical, this information will be used to ensure that any future allocations are made to applicants requiring such adaptations.

Information on the needs and requirements of disabled applicants or other members of the household will also be utilised to inform any subsequent development and investment programs.

7. MAINTENANCE OBLIGATIONS

Following the 12 month warranty period the repairs and maintenance of the mechanical adaptation will be the responsibility of NPH, unless the tenant is informed prior to the work being carried out. Where approved and considered good value for money NPH will procure extended warranties at the time of purchase. In all instances when such equipment comes to an end of its design life a further assessment will be required to make sure it is suitable and gives value for money.

If a tenant assumes responsibility such agreements will be in writing and NPH will advise on checks that need to be made in order to keep the equipment safe and in good working order.

8. OFF ROAD PARKING

Off-road parking will only be assessed for a full-time wheelchair user (who has been prescribed a wheelchair by wheelchair services) who is the car driver, with exception of a child requiring use of a wheelchair and who has a valid blue badge

9. RECYCLING ADAPTATIONS

Where possible, the organisation will carefully consider reusing equipment that is no longer being used, such as stair lifts and hoists, subject to condition and insurance verification.

10. FUTURE TRANSFERS AND MUTUAL EXCHANGES

If residents for whom the association or local authority has undertaken adaptations wish to transfer or mutual exchange to another property it is NPH's discretion (in consultation with WNC) to determine whether such a move can take place. This is in accordance with relevant housing legislation. Each case will be reviewed individually to take into account personal circumstances and will include consultation with the resident.

We will advise residents for whom we undertake adaptations that we may refuse to carry out adaptations to successive dwellings unless there is an overriding need to move, for example overcrowding.

11. RETREIVING ADAPTATED PROPERTIES

In the event that the person(s) needing the adaptations within the property, did not take up occupation or the person(s) who required the adapted property no longer requires the use of the adaptations, NPH will work with the individuals to identify a suitable property to meet their needs and support application for re-housing to enable correct use of adapted property.

For example, if the property was acquired through succession or the resident making use of the adaptations found alternative accommodation.

12. MONITORING, REVIEWS AND EVALUATION

In order to monitor the quality of the overall service, we will periodically ask residents who have benefited from the adaptation service to complete a satisfaction survey.

The *Head of Asset Management & Development* is responsible for the adaptations budget. Performance against budget and target timescales will be reported to EMT on a monthly/quarterly basis

13. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

The delivery of the Adaptations service has operational links to the policies below:

- Asset Management Strategy
- Allocations Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Repairs and Maintenance Handbook
- Adaptations Procedures FLOW CHART
- Scooter Policy
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) Process

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT	
Approved by: Date of approval:	Next Review Date: Version 1
Contact Officer: (Duty Holder) Jean Merrilees, Occupational Therapist Contact: (Responsible Person) Andrea Johnson, Head of Asset Management	

THIS DOCUMENT IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH:
1. Scooter Policy and Guidance leaflet
2. Adaptations Process
3.

REVISION HISTORY				
Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked	Version

DISTRIBUTION – This document has been distributed to:

Name	Job Title	Date of Issue	Version

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