

STOKE-ON-TRENT CITY COUNCIL



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Policy - Minor Adaptations to People's Homes

Aids and Adaptations

2017- 2020

Social Care Occupational Therapy Service

2018

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Minor Adaptations Policy is to provide guidance on how the council provides housing adaptations costing less than £1000 in total to people in Stoke-on-Trent with eligible social care needs, to enable them to manage their long-term conditions and disabilities and carry out their daily living activities safely and as independently as possible.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers;
- How an adaptation is funded.
 - Who can receive a minor adaptation.
 - How a decision is made on what sort of adaptation is required.
 - How adaptations are arranged.
 - Service and maintenance arrangements of installed equipment.
 - Removal of aids and adaptations.
- 2.2 The policy specifically refers to disability related adaptations costing less than £1,000 for the total cost of all adaptations required. These are known as 'minor works' and are based on the recommendation of an occupational therapist (OT) from the Social Care Occupational Therapy Service (SCOTS). This policy **does not** routinely include adaptations where the total cost of adaptations is more than £1,000, which are known as 'major works'. The provision of major works is also based on the recommendation of an OT and is specifically funded by Housing from Council House improvement budgets or a central government grant called the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

3. Key Principles and Service Standards

- 3.1 The policy aims to contribute towards the council's key priorities and objectives set out in the council's 'Stronger Together' vision by supporting vulnerable people in our communities to live their lives well by enabling and supporting more people to live independently and safely.
- 3.2 This policy will ensure that a consistent and fair approach is applied.
- 3.3 The council has a commitment to improving service standards and will undertake routine customer satisfaction surveys to ensure continual service improvement.

4. Legal and Regulatory Framework

The following legislation was relevant in informing this policy

4.1 The Care Act 2014/ The Care and Support (Eligibility Criteria) Regulations 2015

The Care Act is applicable to adults and it makes clear that local authorities must provide or arrange supports for people that meet the eligibility criteria set down in that Act (ie being unable to manage areas of daily living due to a mental or physical impairment or illness, and this inability has or is likely to have a significant impact on the person's wellbeing). The Act also gives local authorities a duty to provide or arrange supports that help prevent people developing needs for care and support, or delay people deteriorating such that they would need ongoing care and support.

4.2 The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970, Section 2)

Applicable to children, this act gives local authorities a duty to assess and assist disabled or chronically sick children that may be necessary and appropriate with assistance in arranging adaptations or the provision of additional facilities to promote safety, comfort and convenience.

Children's Act 1989 (Schedule 2)

The Act requires that local authorities provide family support services for children in need and provide services that minimise the effects of disability and give the opportunity to lead as normal a life as possible

5. Equalities Statement

5.1 The city council recognises that it provides social care support to communities which include wide social diversity and is committed to providing equal access to services.

5.2 The adaptations process aims to treat all customers fairly, with respect and professionalism, regardless of their gender, race, age, disability, sexual orientation and marital status. This policy has been designed to be fully inclusive, regardless of protected characteristics and an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to inform the Policy.

5.3 During an assessment of their social care needs, the council may ask customers to provide details of their gender, age, religion, disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation in line with the protected characteristics identified within the Equalities Act 2010 to help the council to deliver more effective, appropriate and inclusive policies and practices. All data collected is used only for monitoring purposes and kept securely. The Council aims to provide quality services that are designed to meet a wide range of different needs in the community and regularly review them to ensure that no customers are disadvantaged.

6. Policy Detail

6.1 Funding of Minor Adaptations

- 6.1.1 Funding of minor adaptations comes from core social care budgets held within the social care OT service (SCOTS).
- 6.1.2 These budgets are set annually. However, whilst the council is allowed to take cost into consideration in order to provide best value in meeting the needs of people who are eligible for social care support, it is not allowed to use insufficient funding as a reason to delay meeting such a person's needs. Therefore the council might have to move money from other budgets to meet spending on eligible needs, if the minor adaptations budgets came under sustained pressure whilst minor adaptations remained the most cost-effective solution to meet a person's needs.
- 6.1.3 People receiving minor adaptations are not subject to means testing for the cost of those adaptations regardless of the tenure of their property occupancy.

6.2 Who can receive a minor adaptation

- 6.2.1 The following groups can receive a minor adaptation:
- Children who have a disability which has a long-term and substantial effect on their or their carer(s) ability to carry out or support them to carry out daily living activities
 - Adults who are eligible for social care support (ie who have a physical or mental impairment or illness that means they are unable to carry out a number of daily living activities, and this inability has or is likely to have a significant impact on their wellbeing)
 - Adults who are not yet eligible for social care support but would benefit from minor adaptations as a preventative service (either because they are at increased risks of developing needs in the near future, or they have needs but a targeted intervention such as a minor adaptation could reduce other care and support needs)
- 6.2.3 No age restrictions apply to receiving a minor adaptation.
- 6.2.4 A minor adaptation can only be provided with the permission of the home owner/ landlord.

6.3 How do we decide what sort of adaptation is required

- 6.6.1 An OT will undertake an assessment of need to identify any necessary and appropriate adaptations that may meet the needs of the disabled person.
- 6.6.2 Adaptations will be recommended:
- if they are the most cost-effective and appropriate way to meet the assessed needs of an adult or their carer eligible for support under the Care Act

- if they are the most cost-effective and appropriate way to reduce or delay the assessed need for support for an adult or their carer either eligible or on the cusp of being eligible for support under the Care Act
- if they are the most cost-effective and appropriate way to meet the assessed needs of a child eligible for support under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 or Children's Act 1989

6.6.3 The OT will recommend whatever adaptations are feasible, appropriate and cost-effective to meet identified needs.

Where the property is Council-owned and shares a communal access with another property, approval will be sought from the appropriate Council Housing team on a case-by-case basis via an Options Appraisal meeting for works to take place. Relevant justifications for proposed works will be presented and pertinent Housing factors considered before works are either approved or declined with justification. If works are declined, alternative means to meet needs will be proposed, often for progressing by partner services such as rehousing or further Social Care support where appropriate (see 6.6.4).

6.6.4 If an adaptation would be of benefit, but is not feasible (for instance due to the structure or layout of the premises) then the OT will identify alternative solutions to meet the person's needs, which may include major adaptations or referral to a social work or Housing team for other sorts of support.

6.7 How are adaptations arranged

6.7.1 Once the OT has assessed that minor adaptations are necessary and appropriate, they will specify what works are needed and the council will seek quotes from Council-approved contractors and will place an order taking into account the cost and timescale for the work.

6.7.2 The council will only pay for any works completed which is deemed appropriate to meet the individuals need once the OT has signed off on the quality of the work and the specification has been met by the contractor.

6.8 Maintenance and servicing arrangements of any installed equipment

6.8.1 If any equipment is installed as part of the minor adaptation (for example a stair lift), then the council will put in place maintenance and servicing arrangements so that the equipment is serviced and checked at least annually at Council cost, regardless of tenure, as detailed below.

6.8.2 Once the warranty comes to an end, stair lifts, step lifts, vertical lifts and hoists are put onto contract with Stannah Lifts Services (or other suitably qualified organisation if the contract changes). Currently there are two services per year and the customer can contact Stannah 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

6.8.3 Once the warranty runs out on Clos-o-mats, the council signs a three year contract with Total Hygiene (or other suitably qualified organisation if the contract changes) for the maintenance and servicing of the equipment. Again the customer can ring

directly. For rise and fall baths, extended warranties can be purchased from the supplier, at a cost to the council.

- 6.8.4 All private equipment which SCOTS maintain is required to have an annual review. Two years by telephone and the third year face to face.
- 6.8.5 All hoists, whether council or private, will be reviewed face to face annually by an OT.
- 6.8.6 All equipment (either electrical or with moving parts) installed in council properties is immediately registered with Zurich Insurance (or other suitably qualified organisation if the contract changes). Zurich will then ensure that this equipment is checked annually, at a cost to the council.
- 6.8.7 All hoists in both council and private properties are also registered with Zurich Insurance under LOLER regulations 1998 (Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations). These are also checked annually.
- 6.8.8 Non-fixed equipment is provided by the Integrated Community Equipment Service and is excluded from this policy.

6.9 Minor adaptations in homes with shared custody

- 6.9.1 In most cases the council will only provide adaptations at a single property to support a person – this will be the person's main residence. However in cases where two parents have shared custody of a child with a disability (so that both homes count as the child's main residence) the council will provide minor adaptations to both properties if the assessment shows that this is required.

6.10 Removal of Adaptations

- 6.10.1 A fixed adaptation to a property that has been funded by the council becomes part of the owned property and so requires maintenance by the property owner and must not be removed by the person or a claim for further provision may be invalidated. If the property is council owned, the adaptation belongs to the Council and must not be removed by the person, so if a person removes an adaptation without the proper approval then they will be recharged. An equipment installation to a property (such as a stairlift) to any property, regardless of tenure, will belong to and be maintained by the Council (see 6.8.1) but must not be removed without discussion with the SCOTS team or charges may be incurred.
- 6.10.2 In circumstances where an adaptation is no longer required, the council will consider removing it if it may be used in another home. Otherwise, it will be left in place or removed at the owner's cost unless it is a council owned property when it may be removed.
- 6.10.3 If an adaptation is no longer working and beyond reasonable repair then approval may be given for it to be removed following a reassessment of need.
- 6.10.4 The council will not normally remove structural adaptations to a property, for example steps or rails.

7. Appeals and Complaints

- 7.1.1 If a customer is dissatisfied with any decision made about minor adaptations to their property, they have the right to appeal.
- 7.1.2 Appeals will be carried out by the Professional Lead Occupational Therapist from within the council. The appeal may lead to a reassessment or to an upholding of the decision.
- 7.1.3 If a person is not satisfied with the appeal decision, they may register a complaint through the council Social Care Complaints Procedure. People who want to make a general complaint or comment about the assessment process can also use this procedure. Details are available online (www.stoke.gov.uk). It is good practice for the complaint to be acknowledged within three working days of when it is received. The council will aim to respond to the complaint within 15 working days, but will keep the person informed of how long the investigation is likely to take.
- 7.1.4 If the person remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they can refer their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman who will ensure that the decision is in line with the principles set out within this policy.

8. Information Sources

- 8.1 It is intended that people will have access to a range of information about aids and adaptations, through appropriate literature and through receiving advice and assistance from the appropriate officers throughout the assessment and provision process.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 The budget in relation to minor adaptations is an annually agreed revenue budget within Adult Social Care.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 This policy has been subject to an internal consultation process as it reflects our legal duties.

11. Links to Other Policies

- 11.1 The Minor Adaptations to People's Homes Policy is closely aligned to the Major Adaptations Policy that covers adaptations costing more than £1000 in total.

12. Measuring Performance

- 12.1 Performance and delivery of minor adaptations and the social care OT service is monitored by the council's Performance team and reports to the Director of Public Health and Adult Social Care through the Operational Business Management Team meeting on a monthly basis.

Key Contacts

For comments in relation to this policy and its development or for information on the assessment of needs by an OT please contact the

Social Care Occupational Therapy Service:

- Telephone: 0800 561 0015 (office hours only)
- Email: scots@stoke.gov.uk
- Post: SCOTS, Floor 2, Civic Centre, Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 1HH.

For further information on how to influence policy development, please contact the Physical Disability Services Manager:

- Telephone: 01782 236950 (office hours only)
- Email: scotsfc@stoke.gov.uk
- Post: SCOTS, Floor 2, Civic Centre, Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 1HH.

Glossary / Definitions

SCOTS – Social Care Occupational Therapy Service

OT – Occupational Therapist.

DFG – Disabled Facilities Grant.

The Policy – Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Minor Adaptations to People's Homes Policy.

Person – Any Stoke-on-Trent resident accessing social care support.