



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Major Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants

Housing Revenue Account Services

2017 – 2020

Policy under review

Enabling and Projects Team

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Under Review

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Major Adaptations Policy is to provide officers guidance and understanding of the council's approach to the provision of adaptations to support tenants of Stoke-on-Trent City Council with the management of long-term health issues or disability to remain in their home and carry out essential daily activities.

Throughout this policy, tenants of Stoke-on-Trent City Council will be referred to as customers.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers;

- How an adaptation is funded.
- Who can make an application.
- How to make an application.
- The type of assistance available.
- How applications are assessed.
- The alternative options when the cost of the adaptation is not viable for the existing dwelling.
- How applications are prioritised in terms of installation.
- Where a customer installs their own adaptation.
- Where an adaptation affects the rental value of the property.
- How the council makes best use of vacant council properties with existing adaptations.
- Adapting council properties prior to moving in.
- Future occupation and successive applications.
- Service and maintenance arrangements of installed equipment.
- Removal of aids and adaptations.
- What happens when a customer moves after the adaptations are completed.

- 2.2 Under the terms of this policy, a person is regarded as being disabled if they have a physical, sensory or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities within their home. A long-term effect refers to disabilities that have lasted for at least 12 months, or where the effects of which will last for at least 12 months or which are likely to last for the remainder of a person's life.

- 2.3 The policy specifically refers to disabled adaptations costing over £1,000 to properties managed by the council in its landlord capacity. These are known as 'major works' and are based on the recommendation of an occupational therapist (OT) from the Social Care Team. This policy **does not** include aids

or adaptations costing £1,000 or less, which are known as 'minor works'. The provision of minor works are also based on the recommendation of an OT and are specifically funded by Social Care from the 'Minor works' budget. Examples of minor works adaptations include grab rails and hand rails. Examples of minor works aids available include bath boards and toilet frames.

- 2.4 If a customer has a disability, as described in paragraph 2.2 they should contact the Social Care Occupational Therapy Service (SCOTS) on 01782 236950 for an assessment.
- 2.5 This policy specifically relates to council tenants and **does not** extend to;
- home owners
 - leaseholders
 - tenants within the private rented sector
 - tenants of social rented properties, such as Registered Providers.

Assistance for those listed above is available through Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). Please refer to the council's Housing Renewals and Assistance Policy for more information. The SCOTS may also be contacted on 01782 236950, to arrange an assessment.

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 Act is applicable to adults and it makes clear that local authorities must provide or arrange services that help prevent people developing needs for care and support or delay people deteriorating such that they would need on-going 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.

4.3 Disabled Person (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986

This act strengthens the provisions of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person Act 1970 and requires local authorities to meet the various needs of disabled people, including the provision of aids and adaptations

4.4 The Equality Act 2010

The act prohibits discrimination against people with protective characteristics that are specified in Section 4. Section 29 provides that the council, in providing a service to a section of the public, must not discriminate against a person with a protected characteristic who requires the service, by not providing the person with the service. However, Section 15 provides that discrimination on grounds of disability may be justified in law if the council has appropriately balanced the needs of the person with a disability and those of others in need of accommodation. Making better overall use of the housing stock and meeting more needs, including those with disabilities, is a legitimate aim. The cost of adaptations and the suitability of the current accommodation (including under-occupation) are relevant factors when considering proportionality. Alternative means of meeting needs other than adapting the current property, including transfers to more suitable accommodation or customers contributing to costs are options which may be considered.

4.5 The Housing Act 1996 (as amended)

In determining this policy, regard has been given to the City Council's Allocations Policy, which complies with the above Act. More information on how a customer may obtain an adapted property to suit their needs can be found under paragraph 6.15.

5. Equalities Statement

5.1 The city council recognises that it provides housing advice and accommodation services for 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 From time to time, 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 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 Major Adaptations

6.1.1 For major adaptations within council owned properties, the council is required to use funding within the Housing Revenue Account borrowing provision, rather than using Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), which are available to customers in the private sector. The council will normally only fund major adaptations up to a maximum limit, which has been determined by matching the maximum DFG award. This is currently £30,000 (inclusive of Value Added Tax, where appropriate). In circumstances where the equipment and/or works are above the maximum limit of £30,000, the council will discuss the options on a case by case basis, such as;

- re-housing, or
- increasing the maximum limit, having obtained the appropriate approval.

Note: An option appraisal will be invoked for adaptations over a threshold of £20,000 (see paragraphs 6.6.6 to 6.6.9).

6.1.2 The budget for major adaptations is fixed annually within the envelope of capital funds available in that year. In order to manage this budget, the council will prioritise applications in a way that best meets the greatest need, as demand often exceeds the funding available. Further information on this can be found in section 6.8. All major adaptations are subject to budget availability.

6.1.3 Customers applying for major adaptations are not subject to means testing unlike customers in the private sector making an application for a DFG. However, this may be reviewed in the future, should budgetary pressures require the council to reflect a more equitable distribution of the funds by directing assistance to those in most financial need.

6.1.4 A customer may choose to make a contribution in relation to preferred choice, for example, the choice of tiles and increased coverage of a tiled area. Any costs not funded by the council must be in place prior to works commencing.

6.2 Eligibility requirements for making an application – who can apply

- 6.2.1 The council will normally only consider a request for adaptations within a council-owned property if the person;
- is the tenant, or the tenant's partner or a member of the tenant's immediate family; **and**
 - is permanently resident in the household. (This will be substantiated through a residency check); **and**
 - has an impairment which has a significant or serious long terms effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities in and around their home and / or access essential facilities within their home.
- 6.2.2 Adaptations for children of parents with shared access arrangements will only be completed at the property which is the principle and main home. This follows the requirements under the DFG legislation whereby mandatory DFG's are only available in respect of a property which is to be used as the only or main home of the person who is to benefit from the adaptations.
- 6.2.3 No age restrictions apply to making an application.
- 6.2.4 Requests for major adaptations will not normally be approved where a Right-to-Buy application has been received. Customers in these cases will be signposted to the assistance available through the council's DFG Programme once they have bought their home. If the Right-to-Buy application is withdrawn or cancelled, applications for major adaptations may be reconsidered under this policy.
- 6.2.5 If the applying customer has expressed the intention to move from the property, e.g. by way of transfer, mutual exchange or other method, we may decide not to approve major adaptations at their current property. However, each application will be considered on its individual merit.

6.3 Making an application

- 6.3.1 Customers should contact the Social Care Occupational Therapy Service to request an assessment of need by an OT/OT Assistant (OTA). Whilst customers have the right to utilise a state registered independent OT (Royal College of Occupational Therapy can provide information) to assess their need, the council will still consult with Social Care and use its own OT service to assess whether adaptations are necessary and appropriate and will not fund any external OT costs.

6.4 Types of assistance available

6.4.1 Major adaptations are equipment and/or works that cost over £1,000.

6.4.2 Examples (although not exhaustive) of major adaptations include:

- Level access showers
- Large ramps
- Door widening
- Stair lifts
- Through floor lifts
- Hoists
- Structural alterations
- Adaptations for wheelchair users which may also be suitable for some types of mobility scooters

6.4.3 It is the intention to match the same provision with those applied to customers in the private sector, who are eligible for a DFG. Therefore, this policy reflects the provisions set out for DFGs within the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. This states the purposes for which a DFG must or may be given, in order to facilitate;

- Access to and from the home.
- Making the dwelling or building safe for the disabled occupant and other persons residing with him/her.
- Access to a room used or usable as the principal family room.
- Access to or providing for the disabled occupant, a room for sleeping.
- Access to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room(s) in which there is a lavatory, a shower and or bath, a wash hand basin, or facilitating the use of such facilities by the disabled occupant.
- The preparation and cooking of food by the disabled occupant.
- The use by the disabled occupant of a source of power, light or heat by altering the position of one or more means of access to or control of that source or by providing additional means of control.
- Access and movement by the disabled occupant around the dwelling in order to enable him/her to care for a person who is normally resident in the dwelling and is in need of such care.
- Facilitating access to and from a garden by a disabled occupant.

6.5 Types of assistance not available

6.5.1 The following are examples of adaptations that will not normally be funded, although cases will be appraised on individual merit.

- Adaptations for the storage of mobility scooters.
- Vehicular access, hard standings and driveways.
- Certain pieces of non-specialist fixture, equipment and appliances will not be classed as aids and adaptations. In general, this applies where the fixture/equipment/appliance has the same use for another occupant who is not disabled. For example; ovens and hobs and other appliances forming part of an adapted kitchen, fixed window coverings.
- Safe play areas inside or outside.

6.6 The Application Process

6.6.1 An OT will undertake an assessment of need to identify any necessary and appropriate adaptations that may meet the needs and prognosis of the disabled person, in line with meeting Care Act 2014 eligibility criteria.

6.6.2 Having completed the OT assessment, the council must be satisfied that the customer is eligible for this type of assistance in accordance with the criteria shown in paragraph 6.2. Where a customer is not eligible, they will be informed in writing.

6.6.3 Having established that a customer is eligible for assistance, there are number of factors to be considered when assessing whether it is reasonable and practicable to undertake major adaptations having regard to the type, age and condition of the dwelling. For example, the council would not normally provide adaptation where access to the property is compromised, such as being in a first floor flat or in a property accessible only via a steep incline. Further examples of factors taken into consideration (although not an exhaustive list) can be found under Appendix A.

6.6.4 Adaptations will not normally be approved where the customer is in rent arrears. This will be considered on a case by case basis and will take account of individual circumstances, such as the level of arrears and whether any payment plan is in place that is being adhered to.

6.6.5 The council will also consider the wider impact of the requested adaptation in relation to issues such as the family tenancy, regular visitors to the property and any potential increased costs for the customer. Furthermore, there may always be some properties which are considered to be non-adaptable to the

customer's needs. Where this is the case, the council may have to instruct a feasibility study to establish the practicality of the adaptation.

- 6.6.6 The initial review of the application will determine whether;
- the property is currently under or over-occupied or will become under or over-occupied if the requested adaptations are undertaken; and / or
 - the estimated cost of adapting a property is £20,000 or above.
- 6.6.7 A full options appraisal will be invoked if an application hits the triggers listed above in paragraph 6.6.6. However, the majority of applications do not hit the triggers and these are then prioritised to be dealt with in accordance with paragraph 6.8. An acknowledgement letter will be sent to the customer advising them of this.
- 6.6.8 The full option appraisal process will consider whether the work should go ahead or whether an alternative solution can be found which will continue to meet the essential needs of the customer and is the best interests of the customer. Consideration will also be given to whether any extensive adaptation work would
- be the best use of the current housing stock, or
 - negatively affect the future let ability of the property, or
 - prove to be prohibitively expensive.

The council will not normally give permission for any major adaptation where the customer is currently under-occupying or over-occupying their home, where, for example, affordability or the property's long-term suitability for the disabled customer may fall into question.

- 6.6.9 An option appraisal process may also be invoked if other factors listed in Appendix A are in question.
- 6.6.10 Where the application is considered viable following an evaluation of the options appraisal route, it is then prioritised to be dealt with in accordance with paragraph 6.8. An acknowledgement letter will be sent to the customer advising them of this.
- 6.6.11 If an adaptation is considered non-viable, the customer will be advised of the decision in writing, detailing recommended alternative options, as per section 6.7.

6.7 Alternative options where an adaptation is considered non-viable for the existing dwelling

- 6.7.1 Other options will always be considered before extensive adaptations are carried out to a property. These options include;

- the possibility of better use of space within the existing footprint of the property, for example utilising a second reception room/dining room
- a move to a more suitable property that would resolve the need for adaptations and present a better long term solution for the applicant.

6.7.2 For all requests for major adaptations, the council will discuss with the customer the option of a transfer to alternative accommodation that better meets the needs of the disabled person. This could include;

- arranging a suitable alternative within the council's stock, for which a priority medical banding would be given; or
- the purchase of a suitable property to meet the needs of the person; or
- housing with another social housing provider.

6.7.3 Examples of why this may be considered are where;

- A vacant property which is already suitably adapted to meet the essential needs of the customer can be identified.
- A vacant property which is more suitable to be adapted to meet the essential needs of the customer can be identified.
- An extension can be avoided by a move to a larger property.
- The current property is not suitable for a particular adaptation.
- Adaptations to a property may reduce its potential to be let in the future.

6.7.4 Where it is considered that a move to other suitable accommodation would be possible and/or the best solution, a priority banding will be given to the customer to enable them to move more quickly.

6.7.5 If suitable accommodation is available the customer would be expected to accept the alternative property, where reasonable and in consideration of the customer's circumstances.

6.7.6 Once an offer has been accepted on an alternative property, the customer will be expected to take up the tenancy and move in to this property as soon as is practical.

If a customer refuses two offers of alternative accommodation which the council considers reasonably meets their needs, the council may refuse to undertake the requested adaptation to their current property. Under such circumstances, the council will discuss with the customer the options available.

6.7.7 In cases where rehousing is being looked at as the approved/preferred option, then this must be possible within a reasonable timescale (based on an assessment of risk and availability of accommodation). If it is not possible to find suitable alternative accommodation within a reasonable time, adaptations to the existing property or another property will be considered.

- 6.7.8 Where the adaptation is considered by the council as not viable at the current property, having taken all factors into consideration, the council will offer and discuss the alternative options with the customer. If the customer refuses to take up any of those options, the council will refuse to undertake the requested adaptation. The customer will be notified of this decision in writing.

6.8 How approved applications are prioritised in terms of installation

- 6.8.1 Demand for adaptations is often high and therefore approved applications are prioritised by means of a points system, which determines when the works or installation of the adaptation will be dealt with.
- 6.8.2 In general terms, this means dealing with the highest priority cases with the greatest number of points, as determined initially by the OT in their assessment of the customer's needs. This takes into consideration the customer's ability to complete certain key activities and any risks they may be exposed to. Factors such as poor prognoses, breakdown of care or health and safety risks may also contribute to escalating the works by awarding additional points to recognise this.
- 6.8.3 The council will also take into account the length of time a person has been waiting and additional priority points will be added incrementally over time. Should this happen, the council will inform customers who are awaiting an adaptation to explain the position and give an indication as to how long they are likely to have to wait. Where necessary, the council will also work with the customer to explore alternative options such as rehousing or other sources of funding.

6.9 Undertaking the Major Adaptation Work

- 6.9.1 Where the council is funding adaptation works, partially or in full, the council will contract these works through our housing maintenance service provider.
- 6.9.2 Customers undertaking adaptation works through the Tenants Improvements process will source their own contractors.

6.10 Adaptations to Common Parts/Communal Access

- 6.10.1 Adaptations to common parts and communal areas, for example to a shared access path, will be reviewed on a case by case basis via an option appraisal. This will take account of the health, safety and needs of all affected occupants as well as the local area needs and the most appropriate funding agreed where necessary.

6.10.2 Permission will always be sort by the council where an adaptation encroaches on a boundary, property or land not owned by the customer or the council. An example of this would be where ramping is required to shared access.

6.11 Installing Own Aids and Adaptations – Permissions

6.11.1 In some circumstances, customers may wish to be supported to install their own aids and adaptations. This may be where, for example, an aid or adaptation is not available for council funding (as detailed in section 6.5). Under these circumstances, the customer will be responsible for funding the cost of purchase and installation themselves. The council will need to give the customer permission in writing, through the Tenants Improvements Works application process, for most adaptations they wish to make to the property before the work is undertaken, as detailed in the Tenancy and Estate Management Policy. Introductory tenants may also be able to undertake these works if supporting evidence is provided from the SCOTS, an OT or their General Practitioner. Customers will need to make a formal request to their Local Centre stating what adaptation they wish to carry out and will then receive permission or a refusal, with reasons.

6.11.2 If a customer installs their own adaptations, this will still be overseen by the council. Where they are of a technical nature, these will not normally be maintained by the council. Therefore, the customer will be responsible for any servicing or repairs that are required.

6.11.3 At the end of a tenancy, the customer will be required to remove their own installed adaptations and make good any damage to the property. Alternatively, if the council agrees to take responsibility for the alterations, the customer will need to agree to sign over ownership free of charge.

6.11.4 The amount of rent charged will not be affected by privately funded adaptations to the property.

6.12 Where an adaptation affects the rental value of the property

6.12.1 A major adaptation may make significant changes to the size and proportions of the property. An example of this may be where an extension has increased the number of bedrooms / bathrooms or available living space. Other conversions may reduce the number of rooms and therefore also impact on the attributes of the property. In such cases, the council will re-evaluate the rental charges, in line with the rent setting procedures and the new rent will apply having given the appropriate notice period of at least 28 days, in accordance with the terms of the tenancy agreement.

6.13 Maintenance and servicing

- 6.13.1 On re-let of any adapted property there will be routine inspection and maintenance undertaken of aids and adaptations in situ.
- 6.13.2 Certain aids and adaptations will be subject to agreed servicing and maintenance programmes. This generally applies to large pieces of equipment including stair lifts, through floor lifts, step lifts, wash/dry toilets, and hoists.
- 6.13.3 Customers will be expected to allow reasonable access to enable servicing and maintenance of aids and adaptations. Should this not be permitted, customers may be liable for the cost of any deterioration or fault which is attributed to the inability to perform necessary servicing and maintenance. Customers may also be liable for charges in the case of inappropriate call outs or aborted pre-arranged visits.
- 6.13.4 Maintenance/repair of major adaptations to the structure of a property will be undertaken as responsive repairs after a reasonable time (usually 12 months).

6.14 Making best use of existing adaptations in council properties

6.14.1 The council has a commitment to make best use of existing adaptations installed in its properties. The council will maintain its records of adaptations within its stock to facilitate the appropriate matching of properties against customers' needs. The allocation of properties will be based on the criteria set out in the council's current Allocations Policy. The OT based within the Housing Solutions Service will support and facilitate this allocation process.

6.14.2 Direct/Discretionary Lets

- If a property becomes vacant and has extensive or specific adaptations, the decision may be made to allocate the property as a direct/discretionary let. On guidance from the Manager of Housing Solutions and senior officer within SCOTS, it may be offered directly to an applicant requiring those adaptations.
- The council will hold a list of all the applicants who require extensive or specific adaptations and information about all stock which has been extensively adapted. When a property is identified as not being suitable for a normal let this may then be matched to the applicant most in need, based on priority and waiting time.
- The council reserves the right to withdraw adapted properties from the lettings list as appropriate.

6.14.3 Letting adapted properties

- Adapted properties that become available will be offered to those with matching needs or similar needs. If this is not possible within a reasonable

timescale, based on an individual property option appraisal, then properties may be offered to applicants without a need for the adaptations.

- If a person requiring adaptations applies to join the housing register, they may, after being assessed by an OT, be granted priority banding for any suitable adapted properties.
- If a customer no longer requiring adaptations would prefer to move from an adapted property to an un-adapted home, the council will consider this if it has someone else who needs that type of adapted home.
- Future tenants must accept the adapted property 'as is', unless the new tenant's assessed needs require additional special requirements.
- Where the adaptation is preventing the property from being re-let, i.e. in the situation of a long term void, after a certain length of time the council may consider removing the adaptation and for example, placing it into storage. Each case will be considered on a case by case basis with input and advice from relevant officers.

6.15 Financial assistance towards moving into suitability adapted home

6.15.1 Where customers take up the option to transfer to an alternative accommodation that better suits their needs, enabling the adaptation to be installed in a more suitable way providing better value money, then the council may offer financial assistance to cover relocation expenses as part of the adaptations package.

6.16 Adapting Vacant Properties

6.16.1 If the council is considering offering a customer a vacant un-adapted or partially adapted property requiring adaptations or further adaptations, council officers, including an OT and a surveyor will firstly have to assess the suitability of the property to meet the customers assessed essential needs.

6.16.2 Once the OT and a surveyor have made their assessment of a vacant property, the council reserves the right to withdraw an offer of accommodation if the property is not deemed suitable. The customer will be advised regarding their housing options.

6.16.3 If major adaptations are required and the property is deemed suitable, some or all of the adaptation work will be carried out as a priority where possible and practical, to minimise void times.

6.16.4 The customer will be expected to take up the tenancy as soon as is practical. If the customer is able to live in the property whilst awaiting some or all of the adaptation work they will be expected to do so. This will be assessed by an

OT. If minor adaptations are required the customer will be expected to take up the tenancy prior to the adaptations being carried out.

6.16.5 Upon completion of works the customer will be required to transfer from their current property and take up a tenancy in the newly adapted property. They will have no rights to remain in the original property. Failure to take up an adapted property offer once works have commenced, will be deemed a refusal of a reasonable offer and this will affect any future applications they make for aids and adaptations.

6.16.6 Those customers that are not existing council tenants will be advised that failure to take up an adapted property offer once works have commenced, will be deemed a refusal of a reasonable offer and this will affect any future applications they make for re-housing or aids and adaptations, as detailed in the Allocations Policy.

6.17 Future occupation and successive applications

6.17.1 Once major or extensive adaptations have been completed at a property it is expected that the customer requiring the adaptation will continue to live at the address, unless circumstances do not allow this (for example, no longer able to use the property due to a worsening medical condition and further adaptations are not possible).

6.17.2 If a customer applied to be re-housed, unless their circumstances had changed, they would normally be considered to be adequately housed and would have no priority on the housing register.

6.17.3 If they then chose to move to an un-adapted/unsuitable property, any application for adaptations to that property may be refused.

6.17.4 Where significant work has taken place at a property and the customer requiring the adaptation(s) dies or is unable to remain at the property and permanently resides elsewhere, the remaining family members may be asked to move to alternative accommodation to allow the adapted property to be let to a disabled person. Similarly, where the disabled person remains after death of a partner in a joint tenancy, the disabled person may be required to move to alternative adapted accommodation if, for example, the property is under-occupied.

6.18 Removal of Aids and Adaptations

- 6.18.1 An aid or adaptation to a property that has been funded by the council is owned by the council and must not be removed by the customer during or at the end of their tenancy. If a customer removes an adaptation without the proper approval then they will be recharged.
- 6.18.2 In circumstances where an aid or 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.
- 6.18.3 If an aid or adaptation is no longer working and beyond reasonable repair then approval will be given for it to be removed following a reassessment of need.
- 6.18.4 The council will not normally remove structural adaptations to a property, for example ramping, widened doors, level access showers.

7. Appeals and Complaints

- 7.1.1 If a customer is dissatisfied with any decision made about their application they have the right to request a review.
- 7.1.2 Reviews will be carried out by a relevant service manager from within the council.
- 7.1.3 If a customer is not satisfied with the review decision may register a complaint through the council formal Complaints Procedure. Customers who want to make a general complaint or comment about the adaptations process can also use this procedure. Details are available from any council office or online (www.stoke.gov.uk). In line with this procedure, the initial complaint will be acknowledged in writing within two working days and information will be provided about who is dealing with the complaint. The council will aim to respond within 10 working days. If the complaint is more complicated, it may take longer to sort it out but the complainant will be kept informed.
- 7.1.4 If customers remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, the case can be considered by the Housing 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 customers will have access to a range of information about aids and adaptations, through appropriate literature and receive advice and assistance from the appropriate officers throughout the process.

- 8.2 Information will be maintained of adapted properties. A list of adapted properties, setting out the type of pre-adapted council accommodation on offer by area, will be kept up to date by the Housing Solutions, with input from the SCOTS and the council's approved housing maintenance service provider.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 The budget in relation to adaptations is an annually agreed capital budget through the Housing Investment Programme, approved through the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 This policy has been subject to a consultation process including tenant representatives from the Housing Management Board, Tenant Board, elected members and council officers from Housing Services, Housing Assets Team, Legal, SCOTS, Public Health and Adult Social Care Commissioners, senior officers from Children's Social Care and the Parent Engagement Group in Stoke (PEGIS).

11. Links to Other Policies

- 11.1 The Major Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants is closely aligned to, and supports, the delivery of a range of strategic plans and their associated policy framework, including;
- Stronger Together Strategic Plan 2016-20 – The Council's Priorities and Objectives
 - Housing Strategy (2017)
 - Tenancy Strategy (2013-2016)
 - Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan (2017)
 - Housing Renewal Assistance Policy (2016 – 2020)
 - Allocations Policy (2017)
 - Tenancy Policy (2016)
 - Repairs and Maintenance Policy (2015)
 - Tenancy Agreement (2017)
 - Tenancy and Estate Management Policy (2017)

12. Measuring Performance

- 12.1 Performance and delivery of the major adaptations service is monitored by the HAAT and reported to the Director of Housing and Customer Services through the Operational Business Management Team meeting on a monthly basis.

This information is also reported on a quarterly basis as part of the council's Strategic Performance Framework. The framework is intended to enable effective performance management by ensuring that the Council's vision and priorities are translated into clear plans and measureable outcomes. This is reported to the City Director at Senior Management Team meeting, then to Councillors at the Performance Board and finally to Cabinet.

In addition, any issues relating to performance will also be reported to the Housing Revenue Account Tenants' Board and escalated to the Housing Revenue Account Management Board if necessary.

12.2 Measures relating to the Major Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- The average number of calendar days between referral and assessment by the SCOTS for children, adults and as a total of both.
- The average number of days from referral date to completion of the adaptation.

Appendix A

Factors taken into consideration when assessing whether it is reasonable and practical to undertake major adaptations (this list is not exhaustive);

- The age and condition of the property.
- Existing adaptations at the property.
- Cost of adaptations necessary to make the property suitable.
- Length of time the adaptation will take and incumbent void rent loss.
- Whether the property will meet the long-term needs of the disabled person.
- Property constraints in terms of its adaptability.
- Architectural and structural characteristics of the dwelling, some of which may render certain types of adaptation inappropriate, for example properties with narrow doors, stairways and passages, steep flight of steps .
- Property type and demand.
- Availability of more suitable alternative accommodation.
- Availability of the disabled person's existing support network and carers.
- Current occupancy of a property, for example is it under-occupied.
- Any competing needs of different members of the family which cannot be met in that particular home.
- Whether adaptations affect the amenity of the area for other residents
- Where works would require planning permission or building regulation approval which has not been, or would not be, granted
- Where the city council is taking possession proceedings against the customer for example, for rent arrears or anti-social behaviour
- Whether adaptations make the best use of the council's housing stock and whether the adaptation affects the future let ability of a property
- Whether it is a ground floor in a block of flats

Key Contacts

For comments in relation to this policy and its development please contact the Enabling and Projects Team:

- Telephone: 01782 238800 (office hours only)
- Email: housing.strategy@stoke.gov.uk
- Post: Housing Services Enabling and Projects Team, Floor 2, Civic Centre, Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 1HH.

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: DRT@stoke.gov.uk
- Post: SCOTS, Floor 2, Civic Centre, Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 1HH.

For information on the provision of adaptations please contact the Housing Assistance and Adaptations Team:

- Telephone: 01782 232008 (office hours only)
- Email: council.adapts@stoke.gov.uk
- Post or in person: Housing Assistance and Adaptations Team, Floor 2, Civic Centre, Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 1HH.

For information about housing allocations please contact the Housing Solutions Service:

- Telephone: 01782 233696 (office hours only)
- Email: housing.adviceservices@stoke.gov.uk
- Post or in person: Housing Advice Services, One Smithfield, Leonard Coates Way, Hanley, ST1 4FA.

For further information on how to influence policy development, please contact the Tenant Involvement Team:

- Telephone: 01782 235916 (office hours only)
- Email: tenantinvolvementteam@stoke.gov.uk
- Post: Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Team, One Smithfield, Leonard Coates Way, Hanley, ST1 4FA.

Glossary / Definitions

SCOTS – Social Care Occupational Therapy Service

OT – Occupational Therapist.

OTA – Occupational Therapist Assistant.

DFG – Disabled Facilities Grant.

The Policy – Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Major Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants.

Customer – tenant of Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Common parts – this term relates to those areas outside of an individual dwelling but within the structure of the building, for example, entrance hallways or communal staircases to blocks of flats.

Communal access – this term relates to shared access to a group of properties, for example, shared paths and steps.