



# Adaptations Policy

## 1.0 Purpose and scope

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This policy outlines Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) approach to minor and major adaptations to our residents' homes.

The policy applies to residents living in homes that are owned and managed by NHG. However, there are limitations to the service we provide to our leasehold residents.

The policy does not apply to residents living in homes that are not owned by us.

This policy must be read in conjunction with individual tenancy agreements, leases, licences or similar as our obligations for each property and tenure can differ.

## 2.0 Definitions

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**Adaptation:** The Chartered Institute of Housing describes the aim of an adaptation as an opportunity to 'alter the disabling environments to restore or enable independent living. The focus of this approach is not on buildings and equipment but on individual solutions for people experiencing a disabling environment'.

**Mobile and non-fixed aids:** Items or systems that can support an individual with maintaining as much independency as possible. These can include bed hoists, bath boards, walking frames, bed, sofas or chair raisers and are usually subject to the outcome of the assessment.

**Minor adaptation:** A small and relatively quick piece of work that would not normally exceed a £1,000 of a total cost. These include, but are not limited to, grab rails, hand rails and stair hand rails, flashing door bells and smoke alarm alerts (for hearing and visually impaired residents), window opening equipment, provision of suitable taps, door handles, sockets, internal door threshold ramps or door entry systems. Some type of minor adaptations can be carried out without the need of a referral from an Occupational Therapist (OT).

**Minor adaptation without delay:** where the resident can request an adaptation directly with NHG. NHG can support the resident to determine whether the request falls into the minor category. We may use an accredited trusted assessor to carry out the assessment on our behalf to determine the scope of the work.

**Major adaptation:** a substantial alteration often requiring structural changes to be made resulting in a permanent change to a property. This work could potentially be in excess of £1000 and require project management resources. Changes can include, but are not limited to, level or ramped access to bedroom or bathroom, fixed ramps and other external facilities, widening of doors and windows, lifts and hoists, stair lifts, specially equipped kitchen, bathrooms or showers.

**Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG):** Government funding available to disabled residents to pay for, or towards, adaptations to their home. Funding decisions are delegated to local authorities and can be applied for by anyone.

**Homes England:** The National Housing and Regeneration Agency for England, formally known as the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). Homes England is an executive, non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

## 3.0 General principles

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### 3.1 Rented accommodations

NHG residents will need to seek permission to adapt their home. We will not refuse permission unless we have reasonable grounds for doing so, e.g. the length of the resident's tenancy, how much work is needed and whether planning permission is needed.

We are not legally required to carry out adaptations to residents' properties.

We do not supply mobile or non-fixed aids, as this is the responsibility of each individual local authority or social services department. Residents or their advocates should communicate with their local authority directly to be assessed for the above aids.

Applicants (i.e. a member of the public that applies for a rented NHG property) have a right to request adaptations to be made before they accept the property. We will adapt the property only if the requests are reasonable. In deciding whether an adaptation is reasonable we will consider:

- The type and length of the letting;
- How much the adjustment will cost;
- The landlord's resources; and
- How effective the proposed change is likely to be.

Examples of reasonable changes are:

- Remove, replace or provide any furniture, furnishings, materials or equipment (so long as it would not become a permanent fixture when installed);
- Replace or provide signs or notices;
- Replace taps or door handles;
- Replace, provide or adapt door bells or door entry systems; or
- Change the colour of any surface (e.g. a wall or a door).

### **3.2 Rented accommodations – Housing and Care & Support**

In addition to the above, NHG's registered businesses (Housing and Care & Support) have a duty to co-operate with relevant organisations to provide an adaptations service that meets the resident's needs. We work in partnership with other agencies, e.g. local authorities, social services departments, health services, primary care trusts, home improvement agency and other local partners, in order to deliver an effective service.

### **3.3 Home Ownership**

Homeowners need to seek our permission before instructing any work in their property in line with the terms of the lease and NHG Improvement policy.

We will consider providing adaptations in communal areas of leaseholder schemes, where a need has been identified. The cost of communal leasehold adaptations may be collected through the service charges, or other funding arrangements. In some instances, residents may be responsible for the funding of the work, e.g. minor adaptations.

We do not provide an adaptations service to individual residents in our Home Ownership properties. However, we advise NHG Home Ownership residents to contact their local authority to apply to request an assessment from an occupational therapist.

### **3.4 Parking spaces**

Allocation of parking spaces is managed through the [Parking management policy](#).

## **4.0 Application**

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We accept requests for both minor and major adaptations directly from our residents or by someone acting on their behalf.

We recognise that some residents applying for adaptations may be vulnerable or have additional support needs. Where this is identified and the resident requests it, we can provide support to assist with the application process.

## **5.0 Assessment**

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We assess each request for an adaptation on an individual merit and we seek the necessary information to support our decision.

In line with our Safeguarding policy, in urgent cases, e.g. where a resident may be at serious risk in their home without an adaptation and where the local authority is unable to assist with an immediate assessment, we will consider a private occupational therapist to carry out the assessment.

Throughout the assessment process we work closely with residents, advocates, occupational therapist team and other technical staff teams involved in the process to ensure each party is kept up to date with the process.

## **6.0 Funding**

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Residents might be able to obtain support from the local authority for equipment and adaptations costing less than £1,000.

Residents that require adaptation works in excess of £1,000 might be able to obtain a DFG. Some of the local authorities' decisions may be means tested.

### **6.1 Rented accommodations – Housing and Care & Support**

We allow an annual budget to meet the cost of adaptations to our properties.

For major adaptations, we will always seek funding agreements (full, joint or partial) with individual local authorities through DFG. We assist with the DFG application process and, where necessary, we liaise with occupational therapists to expedite applications.

We liaise with local authorities, social services and partnership organisations to secure external funding for major adaptation and where appropriate, we pursue opportunities to jointly fund major works with our partners.

Prior to any adaptation work taking place we meet with the resident, occupational therapist, colleagues and contractors to consider any disturbance that might result from the work, taking steps to minimise any inconvenience and impact caused to the resident.

If there is significant disturbance to the resident we may provide alternative accommodation for the duration of the work. This decision is granted at our discretion and is in line with NHG's Decants Policy and Procedure.

## **7.0 Works**

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Where we are responsible for carrying out the works we use approved contractors who specialise in carrying out adaptation work. We may require a tender process for major adaptation work in accordance with NHG Procurement Policy.

We monitor all equipment under warranty, to make sure we can promptly seek repairs or replace the adaptations if required.

## **8.0 Decisions and Appeals**

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Where we cannot commit to carrying out a request, we clearly communicate our decision to the resident.

Where we refuse permission for a third party to carry out adaptations on our property, we clearly communicate our decision to both the resident and third party.

Appeals against adaptation decision are dealt with in line with our Complaints Policy.

## **9.0 Our approach**

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In writing this policy we have carried out assessments to ensure that we are considering:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Privacy & Data Protection

We also carry out consultation with our staff, customers and the wider community. If you'd like more information about this work, please get in touch with us at [policy@nhg.org.uk](mailto:policy@nhg.org.uk)

## 10.0 Reference

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The following Acts are relevant to this policy:

- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- Children Act 1989
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995
- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000
- Regulatory Reform (Housing assistance) (England and Wales) order 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Care Act 2014

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### Document control

Author	Michael Drozynski, Policy Officer
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Approved by	Policy group
Policy owner	Head of Assets
Accountable Director	Director of Asset Management

### Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version
November 2020	New NHG policy created	1.0
October 2022	Reference to Parking management policy added	1.1