



# Adaptations Policy

## 1.0 Purpose and scope

This policy outlines Notting Hill Genesis's (NHG) approach to minor and major adaptations to our residents' homes. Adaptations provide our residents with a safe and accessible home.

The policy applies to residents living in homes that are owned and managed by NHG, excluding Temporary Housing. 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 and licences.

## 2.0 Definitions

**Adaptation:** The purpose of an adaptation is to modify the home environment to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for individuals and their families. The focus is on identifying and implementing an individual solution to enable someone living in a disabling home environment to use that home more effectively, rather than on the physical adaptation itself.

**Mobile or 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 piece of work that would not normally exceed £1,000 in total. These include, but are not limited to, grab rails, handrails and stair handrails, flashing doorbells 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 minor adaptations can be carried out without a referral from an occupational therapist (OT). If there are several adaptations in one property which combined exceed £1,000, they would still qualify as minor adaptations.

**Major adaptation:** a substantial alteration often requiring structural changes resulting in a permanent change to a property. This work could potentially be in excess of £1,000 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.

## 3.0 Application

### 3.1 Granting permission for a resident to make an adaptation

Adaptions are an important way of ensuring that the house feels like home by being safe, comfortable and accessible for our residents. Although the resident should seek permission to adapt their home, we will not refuse it unless there are reasonable grounds for doing so – for example, where planning permission is needed.

We are not legally required to carry out adaptations to residents' properties, but we believe that our residents need to feel safe and independent in their homes.

Residents or their advocates should communicate with their local authority directly to be assessed for a mobile or non-fixed aid.

#### 3.1.1. Home Ownership

Homeowners need to seek our permission before instructing any work in their property in line with the terms of the lease and our improvement policy. We do not provide an adaptations service to individual residents in our Home Ownership properties. We advise NHG Home Ownership residents to contact their local authority to request an assessment from an occupational therapist.

### 3.2. Reasonable adjustment

Housing applicants (a member of the public who applies for a rented NHG property) have a right to request adaptations to be made to a property ahead of them moving in before they accept the property. If the requests are reasonable, we will adapt the property. If we find the request unreasonable and the resident does not agree to the property as is, we may withdraw the offer of a property. We have clear procedures in place to assess whether a request is reasonable. Please refer to our Vulnerability Policy.

Examples of reasonable changes are:

- Remove or replace, 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 doorbells or door entry systems
- Change the colour of any surface, such as a wall or a door

Reasonable adjustments only pertain to auxiliary aids and services as defined by the Equality Act 2010. That means we are not obliged to make structural changes to the property, although the resident can request an adaptation as outlined below.

### **3.3. Requests for an adaptation**

Requests for an adaptation can be made to the local officer. We assess each request for an adaptation to determine whether a minor or major adaptation is required. We may ask for additional information, such as medical records, or OT reports to support any requests.

### **3.4. Support with applying for an adaptation**

We assist our residents in applying for housing adaptations depending on the cost of the adaptation. The first step for a resident is to refer themselves to social services so that an occupational therapist can assess their needs and size of the adaptation.

Once the adaptation needs are assessed, we will assist in either funding or securing the funding through the Disabled Facilities Grant.

In line with our [Safeguarding Policy](#), in urgent cases, 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.

### **3.5 Minor adaptations**

We always provide minor adaptations where the assessment confirms there is a need. Usually, the assessment will be carried out by an occupational therapist. For this, residents will need to refer themselves to social services. Once the assessment is obtained, we will arrange for the minor adaptation to be carried out, if it is assessed to cost £1,000 or less.

#### **3.5.1 Minor adaptation without delay**

If the resident's needs are simple to assess, we consider a qualified contractor as being a sufficient person to assess what adaptation is needed and they can make the adaptation without an assessment from an occupational therapist.

### **3.6 Major adaptations**

As with the minor adaptations, an assessment from an occupational therapist needs to happen before the start of works on an adaptation.

Applications for a major adaptation are made to the local authority, as these are funded through the Disabled Facilities Grant. Where we are able to, we will complete the application on the resident's behalf. In some cases, the resident will need to submit the application.

Where there is a shortfall in funding, we will supplement the Disabled Facilities Grant to ensure the adaptation is made.

## **4.0 Works**

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 our procurement policy. Major adaptations require a

cooperation between us and the specific involved borough and therefore, timeframes for installing them differ.

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

Repairs to equipment installed by our contractor will be prioritised.

## **5.0 Communal areas**

We provide adaptations in communal areas of all tenures, where a need has been identified and recommended by an OT following an assessment. In some instances, individual leaseholders may be responsible for funding the work, for example, for minor adaptations.

For leaseholders, the lease must allow us to carry out improvement works which would encompass reasonable adjustments to common parts.

Where provisions in the lease allow us to split the cost between all leaseholders, we will seek to recover costs through their service charge.

## **6.0. Our approach**

In writing this policy we have carried out assessments to ensure that we are considering equality, diversity and inclusion.

## **7.0. Reference**

The following acts are relevant to this policy:

- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- Regulatory Reform (Housing assistance) (England and Wales) order 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Care Act 2014
- Leasehold Act 2002

The following procedures are relevant to this policy:

- [Reasonable adjustments procedure](#)
- [Adaptations procedure](#)

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### Document control

Author	Gabriela Janiec, Policy Assistant
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Approved by	Policy group
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### Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version
November 2020	New NHG policy created	1.0
October 2022	Reference to Parking management policy added	1.1
23.04.2024	Clarified our role in helping residents apply and a section about communal spaces added.	2.0