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1. Purpose

- 1.1 Lewisham Council is committed to enabling residents to live independently and safely in their own homes by responding to their changing needs through housing adaptations and supporting their health and wellbeing.
- 1.2 This policy sets out Lewisham Council's approach to requests from tenants for aids and adaptations to be installed within one of the properties we own and/or manage directly, including applicable communal areas. For the purposes of this policy, residents in council shared-ownership properties are treated as 'tenants'.
- 1.3 Adaptations for residents who are not council tenants will be managed according to the separate Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and Discretionary DFG Policy.
- 1.4 Minor adaptations under £1,000 for housing association tenants should be undertaken by their landlords.

2. Introduction and scope

- 2.1 Lewisham Council has a duty to consider the housing conditions of its tenants and have regards to the needs of disabled people and those living with long-term illnesses. This duty includes the provision of adaptations in properties owned and/or directly managed by the council to meet the needs of disabled tenants.
- 2.2 This policy supports our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and aligns with our corporate plan to address inequalities. It supports priority four of our current Housing Strategy: supporting our residents to lead safe, independent and active lives.



- 2.3 As a social housing landlord, Lewisham Council, is required to comply with the Consumer Standards, with the Safety and Quality standard being particularly relevant to this policy. We must clearly communicate to tenants and relevant organisations how we can assist those seeking housing adaptations, ensuring these services are available and accessible when needed.
- 2.4 Through a responsive and resident-focused aids and adaptations service, we aim to:
- assist residents to adapt their homes to their changing needs, enabling them to live safely and independently.
 - improve health outcomes, tackle health inequalities and promote independent living.
 - provide housing which best meets the long-term needs of our tenants and their households to ensure their safety, well-being and quality of life.
 - provide a fair and equitable service for all tenants.
 - clearly communicate our decision-making process to tenants.
 - keep up-to-date information about our council housing stock so we know which properties are accessible for disabled residents and to ensure our housing assets are used effectively.

3. Eligibility

- 3.1 To be eligible for aids and adaptations under this policy you must be a council-tenant who either:
- has eligible needs related to a disability, as defined by the Equality Act 2010; or
 - has a long-term condition or terminal illness which causes you to have difficulties in carrying out everyday activities; or
 - experiences challenges living independently, and adaptations could help promote independence.
- 3.2 The requirement of evidence of needs/condition or acceptance of self-declaration will be on a case-by-case basis depending on the individual.
- 3.3 The council meets the cost of providing adaptations from its own budget with no cost to the tenant.
- 3.4 Where a tenant or leaseholder wishes to improve their home by way of a private alteration, they should refer to the Alteration and Improvements Policy for further guidance.

4. Summary of adaptations

4.1. Aids and adaptations fall into two broad categories as detailed below:

Category	Who To Contact	Examples
Minor	Customer Contact Centre (You may need to contact an Occupational Therapist if the request involves more than 1 type of need)	• Rails – grab-rails, handrails, stair handrails • Internal changes – kitchen and bathroom taps and handles, alter heights of power points and electric sockets • Visual impairment needs - highlighting edge of steps, colour contrast rails • Hearing impairment needs - flashing doorbells, vibrating smoke alarm alerts • Additional handset for intercom • Half steps • External metal support rails
Major	Occupational Therapist	• Stair lifts • Through floor lifts • Level access showers • Ramps

4.2 Further examples can be found on our [website](#) and will be kept up to date with any new and emerging aids and adaptations.

5. How to apply

- 5.1 The route to apply will depend on the type(s) of aid or adaptation required.
- 5.2 For requests that fall under the minor adaptations category, tenants should contact the Customer Contact Centre on 0800 028 2028. Where required, we will signpost or refer residents to the Occupational Therapist Team- particularly in cases involving major adaptations, more than one type of minor need, or where a full home assessment is required.
- 5.3 Where the tenant is being supported by an Adult Social Care Occupational Therapist, they will assess their needs for aids and adaptations as part of their assessment of needs.
- 5.4 Where the individual is not being supported by an Occupational Therapist through Adult Social Care but needs to speak with one- for major adaptations or for minor adaptations involving multiple needs- they should contact the Gateway on 02083147777, option 1, in the first instance.
- 5.5 An advocate or representative acting on behalf of a tenant can also contact the council where consent is given.



6. Assessment and installation

General Principles

- 6.1 We will consider any underlying vulnerabilities of the individual(s) in the property as part of this process and record them on our system as appropriate.
- 6.2 When working on a property we will always provide tenants with an appointment. Where we miss an appointment, we will contact the resident to provide a reason, apologise and rearrange the visit.
- 6.3 Tenants must give all authorised employees and agents of the council reasonable access¹ to their home to inspect or carry out any work. This is a legal requirement and a condition of the tenancy. Tenants may be charged for the cost of subsequent legal action arising from our need to gain access.
- 6.4 Where we are unable to complete an installation on a single visit, or within our expected timeframes, we will proactively keep the tenant updated with progress including arrangements for repeat or rearranged visits and satisfactorily complete the works within 'a reasonable time period' considering the tenants needs.
- 6.5 Adaptations will be carried out in accordance with the assessment, to meet the clinical needs of the tenant. The work will not include additional improvements to the home, unless these works are already scheduled under the council's housing capital programme.
- 6.6 Where a particular adaptation is not feasible for the property, we will work with the Occupational Therapist, the tenant, and other relevant parties to explore suitable alternative options. This may include supporting a transfer to more appropriate accommodation, in line with our Housing Allocation Policy.

Minor Adaptations

- 6.7 Where adaptations are minor and don't require an assessment by an Adult Social Care Occupational Therapist, our repairs service will visit your home for an inspection to confirm what minor adaptations are needed.
- 6.8 We aim to have the works completed within 15 days of the initial request.

Occupational Therapy Intervention

- 6.9 If you meet the necessary criteria, the Occupational Therapist Team will carry out a triage assessment within 28 working days of receiving the referral from the Gateway. This triage assessment will help us determine the type of further assessment that may be required.
- 6.10 Based on the outcome of the assessment, we will identify the appropriate adaptation or equipment to meet the tenant's need and assess whether the required adaptation can be made within the tenant's existing home.

¹ We classify as 'no access' where a responsible adult is not present to provide entry



- 6.11 If minor adaptations are required, we aim to complete these within 14 working days, from the time an initial assessment is completed. Major adaptations including structural alterations can take around 13 weeks after approval at adaptations panel, subject to survey & builders lead times.

Maintenance

- 6.12 We will carry out repairs, maintenance and checks to adaptations in accordance with all relevant regulation as required, using the warranty where it applies, and in-line with our Repairs Policy. Tenants must give all authorised employees and agents of the council reasonable access to their home to inspect or carry out any maintenance work.
- 6.13 Repairs and maintenance may also require specialist parts, which will be sourced and installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specification.
- 6.14 If an adaptation requires routine safety inspections and service checks, we will allocate the equipment to our current service providers for ongoing maintenance.
- 6.15 Like-for-like replacements of adaptations will be handled by the repairs service.
- 6.16 Where there is a change in need, we will arrange new Occupational Therapy assessment to ensure that any adaptations provided are appropriate and meet the needs of the tenant or their household member in accordance with this policy.
- 6.17 In general, it is the council's policy not to remove adaptations and to make every effort to let adapted properties to applicants who need them.
- 6.18 The council reserves the right to stipulate that any privately funded/arranged adaptations must be removed at the end of the tenancy and any damage to the property made good, otherwise the council will have to undertake this work on behalf of the former tenant who will then be recharged the cost.

Reasons for Refusal

- 6.19 There are multiple reasons why the council may refuse to carry out all or some of the major work requested. Below are examples of reasons why a request for adaptations may be declined. This list is in not exhaustive:
- The tenant is currently on the Housing Register, except where minor works can be carried out to provide short-term benefits until a suitable alternative property is found.
 - The requested work affects a communal area and would either negatively impact communal space for other residents or be prohibitively expensive.
 - The tenant has an active Right to Buy Application.
- 6.20 If a request for aids and adaptations is refused for any reason, by Lewisham's Repairs Service, the tenant will be supported in exploring alternative solutions. These solutions may include:
- Assistance with joining the housing register to move to a more suitable accommodation.



- Providing information and support with registering for a Mutual Exchange².
- Referral to the Independent Living³ service if suitable.
- Referral to the Income team or Welfare Benefits Advice team who may assist with arrears or payment plans.

6.21 If a request for aids and adaptations is refused for any reason, by the Occupational Therapy Team, the tenant will be supported in exploring alternative solutions. These solutions may include:

- Alternative solutions which could be more necessary, appropriate, reasonable, or practical.
- Advice regarding applying for re-housing to a more suitable property.

6.22 If a request for adaptations is refused by Lewisham Repairs Service, the tenant has the right to appeal. A written appeal must be submitted within 28 days of the decision being communicated. Appeals will be reviewed, and the outcome will be communicated to the tenant.

6.23 If a request for adaptations is refused by the Occupational Therapy Team, the tenant can appeal against this decision. The appeal should be submitted in writing using the appeals form, along with the required information. This form is provided to the tenant after their request for an adaptation is presented at the Adaptations Panel. Appeals will be reviewed by the Occupational Therapy Head of Service, and the outcome will be communicated to the tenant.

7. Monitoring and reporting

7.1 We will monitor this policy through regular reporting and analysis of adaptation requests, completed adaptations, referrals to Occupational Therapists, types of adaptations undertaken, and the associated costs and completion times. This will ensure that there are appropriate control measures in place for recording, monitoring and responding to adaptation applications.

7.2 We will maintain and monitor a set of agreed performance indicators and targets, which will be reported to our Housing Executive Team.

8. Legislation and regulation

8.1 Legislation and regulation relevant to this policy includes, but is not limited to:

- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002
- Housing Act 2004
- The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), introduced under the Housing Act 2004
- Care Act 2014
- Better Care Fund
- The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970

² [Lewisham Council - Swap your home with another social housing tenant](#)

³ [Lewisham Council - Independent living for older residents](#)



- The Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Equalities Duty)
- Armed Forces Covenant
- The Children Act 1989
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Building Regulations 2010

8.2 We will keep this policy and associated processes under review, and will respond to changes in legislation and regulation, as well as consider emerging good practice.

9. Equality, diversity, and inclusion

9.1 An Equalities Analysis Assessment (EAA) was conducted as part of the policy revision process and concluded that the changes are expected to have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics. While the policy itself continues to deliver positive outcomes for individuals with disabilities, including age-related conditions, the changes are primarily focused on improving the clarity and efficiency of the aids and adaptations process.

10. Communication

- 10.1 We will keep this policy available to residents through our website and will share additional information relating to aids and adaptations in other communications with residents – individually as required, and more widely as appropriate.
- 10.2 Any complaints related to aids and adaptations will be handled under our Housing Complaints Policy and processes.

11. Related policies

Related documents which support and complement this policy include but are not limited to:

- Disabled facilities grant (DFG) and discretionary DFG policy
- Homeowner grants policy
- Housing allocation policy
- Complaints policy
- Compensation, reimbursement, and remedies policy
- Required access policy
- Vulnerable residents' policy
- Alterations and improvements policy
- Temporary relocation (decant) policy

12. Reviewing this policy

12.1 Amendments to this policy not reflecting a major change of policy may be made by the Executive Director for Housing in consultation with the Director of Law and Corporate Governance. Such changes will be reported to Members annually.



Housing Services

Tenant Aids and Adaptations Policy

Replaces: Tenant Aids and Adaptations Policy (April 2024)

Expands on our previous policy statement on how we provide aids and adaptations for Lewisham tenants (V2.0)

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Policy owner: Director of Housing Quality and Investment