

Adaptations Policy

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| Date Reviewed | April 2022 | Next Review Date | April 2025 |
| Consultation | Completed | Reviewed By | Head of Housing & Head of Assets & Investment |
| EIA | Completed | Responsible Officer | Jay Gill & Phil Heales |
| DPIA | Completed | Approval By | Executive Team |

1. Purpose

This policy sets out Black Country Housing Groups (BCHG) approach to requests for minor and major adaptations. BCHG will endeavour to provide a high-quality service to support customer to live an independent life regardless of disability or long-term health issues.

2. Scope

This policy applies to rented properties owned and managed by BCHG. The policy does not apply to leaseholders, shared owners, or properties for outright sale.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy a disability is defined as “a physical or mental impairment that has a long-term negative impact on the ability of an individual to live normally without additional support or assistance”

For the purposes of this policy an adaptation is defined as “a physical alteration to a property or its associated environment that’s improves independence and functionality for a disabled person”

4. Related Policy / Procedure and other Documents

Repairs & Maintenance Policy
 Lettings & Allocations Policy
 Mutual Exchange Policy
 Tenancy Policy
 Equality & Diversity Policy

5. Roles and Responsibilities

All adaptation requests must be made in writing to the Customer Relations Manager (CRM) who will undertake an initial review. For simple adaptations such as grab rails, handrails, and lever tap requests, these will be approved by the CRM and sent to Homeforce to deliver the works.

Where adaptation requests are unclear, or require more than a simple adaptation, these will be referred to the appropriate local authority for a DFG assessment

6. Policy Statement

BCHG aims to provide a fair and transparent adaptations service to existing customers and applicants to support independent living.

BCHG will ensure it meets its legal and regulatory requirements in relation to the provision of disabled adaptations.

We will support to more appropriate accommodation where the existing home cannot be adapted, or where the cost of adaptation is deemed too high.

BCHG's retirement living schemes and other accommodation available to mature customers will be installed with a digital Telecare Monitoring Service that supports independent living and where help is available 24 hours a day. Customer will be provided by personal alarms to call the monitoring centre in an emergency. Customers can purchase further digital added features to support them in independent living as required.

We will ensure that in handling the personal data of our customers we will abide by the UK GDPR Data protection rules.

7. Policy Details

Eligibility

BCHG will endeavour to provide adaptations to Customers who have a physical or mental impairment which has an adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities within their own home.

Funding

BCHG set a budget for the provision of adaptations which is reviewed annually, with BCHG contributing up to a maximum of £1000 for agreed minor adaptations.

BCHG will maximise the funding for major adaptations from external statutory sources by working in conjunction with Local Authorities and other Agencies.

Simple & Minor adaptations are those that are non-structural alterations or additions to the property. We will look complete Simple and Minor adaptations without delay in line with our Repairs and Maintenance Policy. These include but not limited to:

Simple Adaptations (Upto £300)

- Fitting grab rails
- Installing additional handrails
- Fitting lever taps

Minor Adaptations (Upto £1000)

- Lowering steps
- Repositioning switches and sockets
- Small ramps

For minor works an Occupational Therapist assessment is not generally required but will work with customers and support workers to ensure that the request meets their short to medium term needs.

Major Adaptations (Over ££1000)

Major adaptations are those that require more substantial and possibly structural alterations. Funding for major adaptations will be maximised from external funding, such as Local Authority Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). All requests for major works will need a full Assessment by an Occupational Therapist. These include but not limited to: -

- Installation of wet rooms/showers
- Installation of an over bath shower & tiling
- Remodelling of rooms
- Large scale changes to stairs & access including stair lifts
- Lowering kitchen units/worktops
- Widening of doorways
- Large ramps
- Extensions of the property to accommodate ground floor bedrooms/bathrooms

BCHG has the right to refuse requests for major work if the adaptation would be incompatible with the long-term use of the asset. These will be exceptional circumstances, and, in such cases, we will work with the customer to find more suitable housing elsewhere.

All works for major works will be approved by Head of Assets & Investments.

Rent & Service Charge implications

Where major works have included an extra room(s), the rent for the property will be reviewed.

Where adaptations require on-going maintenance, service charges will be introduced. Customers will be made aware of this, and their written consent will be obtained before any alterations take place.

Adapted Properties

In line with the Tenancy Standard BCHG are committed to making best use of their stock. We will ensure that we keep a record of all adapted properties and will ensure that these are allocated to those with highest need for this type of accommodation.

8. Data Processing

Personal Data: BCHG will obtain personal data so that we can manage and support our customers, comply with legal obligations, improve our services, and achieve our legitimate business aims.

Data Protection: All personal data will be kept securely on Open Housing or SharePoint.

Data Integrity: Confirmation of disability from external agencies may be required to support the request for adaptations. Any documents will be kept securely on SharePoint

9. Legal and Regulatory Considerations

[The Care Act 2014](#) – The Act offers an opportunity to improve local provision of home adaptations in line with the Act's aspirations and duties to integrate health, social care and housing.

[The Equality Act 2010](#) – Requires landlords to make reasonable adjustments when requested to enable a disabled person to use a property

[The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 \(Section 23\)](#) – Local Housing authorities have a statutory duty to provide grant aid to disabled people for a range of adaptations to their homes.

[Home Standard](#) – Section 2.2.2 of the Homes Standard, states Registered providers shall co-operate with relevant organisations to provide an adaptations service that meets tenants' needs.

10. Equality Diversity & Inclusion

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy which will be updated in line with policy reviews to ensure there is no discrimination and opportunities to improve equality and access are maximised.

11. Compliance, Monitoring & Reporting

If personnel documents confirming health conditions are not securely saved or are leaked into the public domain – the matter will be investigated as per the Data Breach Procedure and addressed through disciplinary procedures where necessary.

Any hard copies of documents will be scanned and saved to secure locations. All hard copies will be destroyed.

Once a customer leaves BCHG, any documents will be destroyed after the 6 years retention period.

A log will be kept on the housing system showing details of those customers who were successful as well as those who were not as this will be reviewed on an annual basis. Satisfaction surveys will be sent out upon completion of work.

12. Customer Voice

BCHG has committed to consult customer facing policies, we work on a 'no voice no approval' basis and we aim to consult customers at stages where they can influence change. Customer's consultation was undertaken with customers and colleagues

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if there is any change of policy, government or RSH.