

DISABLED ADAPTATIONS

Annex to Cornwall Council Housing Assistance
Policy:
Application of Policy to Cornwall Housing LTD (CHL)
managed properties



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1. APPLYING FOR A DISABLED ADAPTATION IN A CHL MANAGED PROPERTY

Adaptations are split into two categories – minor and major - based on the nature of the work required.

Minor adaptations refer to any proposed works that cost up to £1000, such as the provision of handrails, grab rails and lever taps. Major adaptations cover works that cost over £1000 because they are more extensive and complex, such as stairlifts, level access showers, through floor lifts, kitchen conversions and access alterations.

Any resident wishing to request a disabled adaptation in a CHL managed property must have an Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment to support this request, in accordance with Cornwall Councils Housing Assistance Policy.

If the works requested are deemed to be a major adaptation, then this will be assessed through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) process by Cornwall Council, who will provide the applicant with confirmation on whether they meet the eligibility criteria for a DFG and if there is any requirement for them to contribute towards the costs.

If the resident chooses to proceed with the adaptation, Cornwall Council will send the referral to Cornwall Housing Ltd (CHL) to determine whether the works are reasonable and practicable and can be completed within the £30,000 DFG cap.

Any request for minor works are sent direct to Cornwall Housing.

The final decision on any Disabled Adaptation request sits with Cornwall Housing as the approving landlord.

2. ASSESSING A PROPERTY FOR SUITABILITY

In most cases where the request for a Disabled Adaptation is minor and the request will be approved by CHL without there being an assessment of the property.

On major adaptations CHL will assess the home for suitability. This assessment will take into consideration the age, design and condition of the property, the cost of the works, wider health and safety implications and ensuring that the works make best use of the limited available housing stock. Once this assessment is completed CHL will advise Cornwall Council whether the referral will be approved or refused.

To assist in achieving this and to ensure openness and transparency in the application of this policy, disabled aids and adaptations will not be undertaken in a CHL property in the following instances:

- Where the total cost of the disabled adaption works will exceed £30,000
- Where the adaptation does not make best use of property to reflect the long-term use of the home

- Where there is overcrowding or under-occupancy, e.g. situations where the household's bedroom need is either above or below that provided in their current home.
- Where the structure or layout of the property is unsuitable for adaptation
- If the property is a flat on the first floor or above, (excluding sheltered Housing properties), only minor adaptations may be considered.
- Wet rooms on upper floors of properties (40mm and 60mm trays are permissible providing a gravity waste can be utilised, pump wastes are not permissible)
- If the works will affect the warranty on a new home
- Removal of grassed areas or garden ground other than for ramped access

3. IF A PROPERTY IS UNSUITABLE FOR A DISABLED ADAPTATION

Where a resident lives in a CHL home that is not suitable for adaptation, CHL will assist the residents (as in the household member who holds the tenancy), to consider other options available to them and their household to move to a more suitable property, whether via Cornwall Home Choice or directly within CHL stock. Assistance may include:

- Agreeing to a direct match to another CHL property
- Giving preference for CHL vacancies before they are advertised externally to other applicants.
- Providing advice on how to apply to Cornwall Homechoice and the bidding process.
- Working with Cornwall County Council and other statutory providers to offer the necessary support.

4. RIGHT TO APPEAL

If a resident is unhappy that CHL have deemed a property as unsuitable for adaption this decision can be appealed, by contacting CHL direct:

- *In writing to:* Disabled Adaptions, CHL, Chy Trevail, Beacon Technology Park, Bodmin, Cornwall, PL31 2FR or
- *By email to:* assets@cornwallhousing.org.uk
- *By calling:* 0300 123 4161.

The appeal should include details of what is being disputed and the desired resolution.

5. MAINTENANCE OF THE EQUIPMENT

There are several Disabled adaptations that will require ongoing insurance and ongoing repairs and maintenance i.e., stairlifts, through floor lifts. CHL will maintain, repair and insure disabled aids and adaptations in their properties.

The cost of any repairs, maintenance and insurance of any specialist equipment, such as a stairlifts, hoists, through floor lifts or external lifts, installed on or after 1st October 2024 will be recharged to the resident in the form of a service charge.

6. VOID PROPERTIES

CHL may elect to adapt a property whilst it is void, so that it can be advertised and let as an adapted property. If a void property meeting this objective has previously been partly adapted, CHL may elect to carry out further works. The maximum amount of adaptation work that will take place on a void property will be £30,000.

CHL will generally remove any mechanical disabled aids from our properties when they become empty as they have been specified to meet the requirements of an individual resident. Other adaptations such level access showers, and wet rooms will be left in the property for the incoming resident.

Disabled adaptation works will not take place on void properties where planning consent is required as this will significantly delay the letting of a property.

Any resident moving into a property containing specialist equipment, such as a stairlifts, hoists, through floor lifts or external lifts, will have to pay a service charge to cover the cost of any repairs, maintenance, and insurance.

7. LETTING HOMES

Where properties are adapted or have level access, CHL may advertise those homes with additional preference for households with those needs.

When a significantly adapted home is let, CHL may include a clause in the tenancy agreement stating that the resident may be required to move should the household's need for adaptations change.

8. ADAPTED HOMES

Where an adaptation is carried out to an existing resident's home which is high cost, extensive or complex, CHL may seek to vary the terms of the tenancy agreement as a condition of the adaptation proceeding.

The variation will state that the resident may be required to move should their circumstances change, and the adapted home is no longer required by the resident or a permanent member of their household.

This is to ensure that such homes are available for residents with the specified needs to ensure that CHL maximises opportunities for independent living within its homes.

Where a resident must move, CHL will provide rehousing assistance.

9. MUTUAL EXCHANGE

In cases where a property has undergone major adaptation work and a resident wishes to exchange, this will only be approved if the other party to the exchange has an identified need for the adaptations.

If the property the resident is moving to is another CHL property that is not currently suitable for their needs, then the guidance in this annex will apply.

10. NEW BUILD PROPERTIES

Permissions will not be granted to undertake any disabled adaptation whilst the new build property remains within the defect liability or where it would affect the warranty on the property.

11. COMMUNAL AREAS

Requests for adaptations to communal areas such as a stair rail or ramp within communal entrances will be considered. Any positive or negative impact of an adaptation on other occupants of the building, including servicing charging will be assessed and evaluated before any adaptation is agreed or refused.

Each case will be considered on its merits and discussed with a senior officer.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

We are committed to treating all people with fairness and respect. We aim to create an inclusive environment where people are treated with dignity, inequalities are challenged, and we anticipate and respond positively to different needs and circumstances to enable individuals to achieve their potential and foster good relations within the communities we serve. We want to be recognised as an organisation delivering fair, inclusive, accessible services and an employer and partner of choice.

When applying this policy, we act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and to reduce discrimination and harassment by making reasonable adjustments such as:

- eliminating discrimination – by providing support to those who need it and information in accessible formats and languages on request.
- tailoring the policy to meet both the specific needs of the individual, including those with additional support needs, and the diverse needs of the wider community.
- advancing equality of opportunity – treating all tenants fairly
- fostering good relationships – listening to customers and responding appropriately
- compliant with all aspects of Equality & Diversity legislation, and specifically the Equality Act 2010.

Contact us:

Email: info@cornwallhousing.org.uk

Telephone: **0300 1234 161**

By letter: **Cornwall Housing, Chy Trevail, Beacon Technology Park, Bodmin, PL31 2FR**

Alternative formats:

If you would like this information on audio CD, audio tape, Braille, large print, any other format or interpreted in a language other than English, please contact info@cornwallhousing.org.uk

