

Adaptations Policy for Uttlesford District Council Tenants with Disabilities

The aim of the Policy is to keep disabled and long term sick tenants in their homes and able them to carry out essential day to day activities.

Under section 8 of the Housing Act 1985, local housing authorities have a duty to consider housing conditions and provision in their area. This specifically includes a duty to examine the particular needs of disabled people. This policy is in the Councils opinion in compliance with the general tenor of the Act.

The definition of a disabled person under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 states that the person is disabled if:

- a) Their sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired.
- b) They have a mental disorder or impairment of any kind.
- c) They are physically substantially disabled by illness, injury, impairments that have been present since birth or otherwise.

Eligibility

You will be considered for disabled adaptations if you are an Uttlesford District Council Tenant and you have an impairment which has a serious long term effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities as stated above.

To qualify for disabled adaptations you must have a referral in writing after the completion of an Assessment of Individual Needs from your Social Services Occupational Therapist or your Hospital Occupational Therapist. The adaptations recommended must be **necessary, appropriate** and **reasonable** and **practicable** to meet the needs of the disabled person.

When making a decision on adaptations we will take into account:

- Existing adaptations.
- The cost of adaptations necessary to make the property suitable.
- The adaptability of the current property.
- Property type and demand.
- The likely availability of more appropriate alternative accommodation.
- The availability of the tenants existing support network and carers.

Uttlesford Council will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the Occupational Therapist's recommendations.
- Notify the tenant and the Occupational Therapist whether the Council will or will not undertake to fund and provide the adaptation.
- Advise the tenant as to the extent of the work to be undertaken.
- Advise the tenant of the timescale of the work and update them if this changes.
- Notify the tenant which contractors have been instructed to do the work and arrange appointments for the contractors to gain entry.

To qualify for the disabled adaptations the person concerned would have to be a tenant or their partner or an immediate member of the family who permanently resides at the address. Tenants of any age may apply for the adaptations.

Time Scales

Small adaptations and aids take an average of 28 days to be provided and installed into the property. An example of a small adaptation/aid would include but not be exhaustive of, hand rails, stair rails, raising of electrical sockets and lever taps.

Uttlesford District Council will look to facilitate a person who is to be discharged from hospital and may be able to install a **small** aid within seven days on referral or recommendation from the hospital to facilitate the discharge process.

Major adaptations may include but not be exhaustive of, installing showers, wet rooms, adapted kitchens and ramped access to homes. These may be available through referral of the Occupational Therapist in writing to Uttlesford District Council and are subject to a waiting list and funding availability on a priority basis. The 'priority' system will be operated to determine the order in which such assessments are progressed.

The waiting list times are subject to change due to demand and the priority waiting list. The waiting list is prioritised by referral from the Occupational Therapists recommendations for urgency and is also subject to funding availability.

Alternatives

If the home occupied by the disabled person is a home for people without special needs and/or under occupied whereby there are bedrooms in the property not being occupied as sleeping facilities on a regular basis then the person seeking the adaptations may be asked to move to a property more suitable for their needs or where the adaptations are already in place.

Where a tenant moves from a 3 or 4 bedroom property to a 1 or 2 bedroom property owned by the council they will be offered £500 to cover removal costs plus £500 for each bedroom 'released', subject to a maximum payment of £2000.

Re-housing must be considered by both the council and tenant where necessary, where it is not reasonable or practicable to carry out the adaptations requested. Where re-housing is requested and with careful consideration to and in communication with the tenant the council will ensure that the disabled person is not moved out of the area to an area where the support system for that person could no longer be in place.

In the following circumstances it may not be **reasonable or practicable** for aids and adaptations to be carried out:

- Where there are concerns about the age and condition of the property
- Where the property will not meet the long term needs of the disabled applicant
- Where the architectural and structural characteristics of the dwelling may render certain types of adaptation inappropriate
- The practicalities of carrying out adaptations to properties with narrow doors and stairways and passages which might make wheelchair use in and around the dwelling difficult, or with limited access e.g. steep flights of steps making access for wheelchair use difficult and therefore make continued occupation of the dwelling open to question.
- Where there is a single person or a couple occupying a family house with more bedrooms than needed for sleeping purposes.
- Where there are competing needs of different members of the family which cannot be met in that particular home
- Access ramps that will adversely affect the amenity of the area for other residents
- Where the council is taking Possession Proceedings against the tenant, for example, rent arrears.

Funding

Where an adaptation has been agreed the council will fund the cost of the adaptation and installation costs.

The funding is formed from and made available from the Capital Programme budget which is restricted and therefore the need for priority applications will take precedent over less urgent applications.

Reasons for refusal of applications

Requests for adaptations will not normally be approved where a Right to Buy application has been received or you are on the transfer list. The council will also not progress with an adaptation where proceedings have commenced against a tenant for breach of tenancy. If the applicant is under investigation for anti-social behaviour, the council will consider all the circumstances and may refuse the application.

If the recommendation is not reasonable or practicable.

If a request for an adaptation is refused you will receive the reason for refusal in writing from Uttlesford District Council.

Each individual application will be reviewed on its own merit.

If tenants wish to install their own adaptations

If you wish to install your own adaptations approval must first be gained from Uttlesford District Council in writing to the Head of Housing Services stating what works and adaptations you wish to carry out.

Any adaptations not installed by Uttlesford District Council will not be maintained by Uttlesford District Council so responsibility for any repairs work will lie with the tenants themselves.

At the end of the tenancy it may be requested that you remove any alterations and make good any damage to the property.

Adapted Properties

When a property has been adapted for a disabled person the adaptations will remain in place as the property will be entered onto a register for future use for people with disabilities. The adaptations will not be reversed once they have taken place so for example, where a bath has been replaced by a shower and new tenants enter the property the shower will remain. Where possible the property will be used again by someone with the needs of the adaptation. Where that is not possible due to supply and demand the above is adhered to and the adaptations will stay in place for any future use.

If your needs change

If your needs change after any adaptations have been made – for example, if you find you can no longer do something you could manage before please

contact us and with further referral from the Occupational Therapist we will arrange to have another look at your needs.

Data Protection

We will keep some of your personal data, including sensitive personal data, to process your request and carry out any adaptations.

We will treat all information as strictly confidential, however, we may share information with other council departments, the Benefits Agency and contractors but only to make sure the work is carried out correctly and to prevent fraud.

Telling us what you think and how to make a complaint

After any works have been carried out we will send you a customer satisfaction survey to complete and return to us. The feedback you give us will help us to see how successful the adaptations have been for you and also help to improve our service in the future.

If you have a complaint regarding the service you have received please put it in writing to:

Head of Housing Services
Uttlesford District Council
London Road
Saffron Walden
Essex
CB11 4ER

Your complaint will be dealt with and you should receive an acknowledgement to your complaint within 10 working days of receipt by Uttlesford District Council.

If you require this document in another language or format please ring 01799 510510 or email uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk

Equality and Diversity Group
Uttlesford District Council
London Road
Saffron Walden
Essex
CB11 4ER

Tel: 01799 510 510

Text phone
Tel: 18001