

Aids and adaptations policy

January 2025

Housing
Management



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

**ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON and CHELSEA
HOUSING MANAGEMENT**

AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY

January 2025

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2 Introduction

- 2.1 The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) Aids and Adaptations Policy outlines the Council's approach to providing equipment and modifications that enhance residents' living conditions and support their independence. RBKC is dedicated to ensuring all residents have access to accommodations that are both suitable and accessible to their needs.
- 2.2 This Policy aims to:
- Provide clear criteria for decision-making on the provision of aids and adaptations.
 - Outline any exclusions or restrictions that may apply to residents requesting aids or adaptations.
 - Explain the application process for requesting adaptations.
 - Clarify the financial contributions residents may be required to make for installing aids and adaptations.
 - Highlight the circumstances under which RBKC may refuse to provide adaptations.

3 Related Documents

- [RBKC's Housing Strategy](#)
- [RBKC's Housing Management Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [RBKC's Accessible Housing Factsheet](#)
- [Home Adaptation Key Stages for Council Tenants](#)
- [Home Adaptation Key Stages for Private Sector Tenants and Owner Occupiers](#)
- [Home Adaptation Key Stages for Tenants of Registered Social Housing Providers](#)
- [RBKC's Tenancy Policy](#)
- [RBKC's Housing Allocations Scheme](#)
- [RBKC's Housing Management Complaints Policy](#)
- [RBKC's Improvements to Your Home Policy](#)
- [RBKC's Repairs Recharge Policy](#)
- [RBKC's Mobility Scooter Policy](#)
- [Bi-borough Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2023 - 2033](#)

4 Legal Context

- 4.1 This Policy ensures full compliance and adherence to the relevant legislative and regulatory framework as listed below:
- The Housing Grants and Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended)
 - Equality Act 2010

- Housing Act 1985
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- National Assistance Act 1948
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- Disabled Persons Act 1985
- Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002
- NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- The Care Act 2014
- Housing Act 2004

5 Policy Scope

- 5.1 This Aids and Adaptations Policy applies to tenants and residents within the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, including those living in:
- council-owned properties,
 - private rented accommodation, and
 - registered provider (RP) housing.
- 5.2 The policy covers the provision of equipment and modifications designed to improve accessibility and support independent living. These adaptations range from minor adaptations such as handrails and ramps to major alterations like stairlifts, through-floor lifts, and level access showers.
- 5.3 Adaptations for children and adults with disabilities will also be covered in this policy.
- 5.4 This policy does not cover routine repairs or general maintenance. All requests for adaptations will be reviewed in line with RBKC's available resources and budgetary considerations.

6 Definitions

- 6.1 For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- **Disabled Person:** References to a disabled person within this policy will follow definition set out under the Equality Act 2010.

A disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A long-term effect is defined as:

- Lasting at least 12 months,
- Expected to last at least 12 months, or
- Likely to last for the remainder of the person's life.

- **Registered Providers (RPs):** This refers to social housing providers regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing. For the purposes of this policy, 'RPs' will specifically refer to housing associations only.
- **Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC):** References to "the Council" throughout the policy also refer to RBKC and its services.

7 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 Several teams and parties are involved in delivering aids and adaptations to RBKC residents. The key roles and their responsibilities are outlined below:

Within RBKC

7.2 The Occupational Therapist (OT) Complex Team:

- Conducts assessments to identify the functional needs of residents.
- Recommends appropriate aids and adaptations for residents.
- Refers major adaptations to the Aids & Adaptations (A&A) Team.
- Reviews the suitability of installed equipment upon request.
- Provides temporary solutions for residents awaiting permanent adaptations.

7.3 Neighbourhoods Team – Visiting Officers:

- Conducts home visits on behalf of the A&A Team for council tenants.
- Cross-checks occupants against council records to ensure tenancy details are accurate.

7.4 Housing Health and Disability Team – Occupational Therapist

- Attends viewings with tenants moving into RBKC properties
- Assesses the suitability of the property during a viewing in relation to the needs of the tenant
- Can make a direct referral to the A&A Team for the installation of urgent adaptations following a viewing
- Can make a referral to Adult Social Care for non-urgent referrals following a viewing

7.5 Aids and Adaptations Team (A&A Team):

7.5.1 A&A Case Worker:

- Manages the end-to-end process of adaptations, from referral to completion.
- Obtains consents from residents and landlords.
- Submits grant applications to the Grants Officer
- Manages data and referrals to the A&A Team.
- Communicates with residents throughout the process.

7.5.2 A&A Grants Officer:

- Provides administrative support for the A&A Team.

- Processes applications and means tests for private sector adaptations.
- Processes approved adaptation requests for council properties.

7.5.3 A&A Team Leader:

- Oversees the A&A service delivery and team management.
- Authorises financial commitments, grants and manages budgets.

7.5.4 Building Surveyors:

- Carries out technical assessments based on OT recommendations.
- Prepares specifications and plans for adaptation works.
- Obtains formal building permissions, as required.
- Procures contractors and inspects completed works.
- Ensures all works comply with relevant health and safety regulations.

Outside of RBKC

7.6 Landlords and Registered Providers (RPs):

- Provide consent for adaptation works.
- Arrange for asbestos checks and removal where necessary.
- Offer health and safety documentation
- Provides funding for adaptations exceeding £30,000.
- Maintain and repair adaptations outside of the defect period.

7.7 Residents:

- Request assessments from RBKC's OT team for aids and adaptations.
- Provide consent for proposed works and grant property access to RBKC staff and contractors.
- Notify the Council of any changes in needs or circumstances during the process.

8 Eligibility and Tenancy Verification

Eligibility Criteria

8.1 To qualify for aids and adaptations assistance from RBKC, residents must meet the following criteria:

- the resident must be a disabled person as defined under the Equality Act 2010 ([see Definitions section](#)), and
- the resident's disability must require them to have adaptations to their home, and
- the resident must be a Council, a registered provider (RP), or a private rented sector tenant within the borough, or
- alternatively, the resident must be a household member of the tenant's family who qualifies as a disabled person and has been a permanent household member for at least 12 months can also be considered. The household member must continue to reside in the property for at least 5 years.

- 8.2 For a person to be recognised as a permanent household member, they must be registered on the tenancy or listed as an occupier in the property, and the property must be their principal and sole address.
- 8.3 In cases where the disabled person is a child, adaptations will only be implemented at the child's principal address which is typically identified as the residence of the parent in receipt of child benefit.
- 8.4 RBKC may use its discretion in situations where a child's parents reside in separate households, and joint custody arrangements are in place. RBKC may consider installing adaptations in both properties to enable the child to maintain their normal living arrangements. Such circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Tenancy Verification

- 8.5 For RBKC tenants, the Council will match the details of the person requiring adaptations against the tenancy information stored in the Council's system.
- 8.6 In some cases, the Council may request additional information to verify the tenancy before proceeding with adaptations. Failure to provide this information may delay or cancel the approval and installation of adaptations.
- 8.7 The Neighbourhoods Team may conduct home visits to council properties (excluding sheltered accommodation) to verify occupancy details.
- 8.8 For private sector tenants, proof of tenure, such as a valid tenancy agreement, must be provided before adaptation works can begin.
- 8.9 RBKC reserves the right to consider applications from residents who do not fully meet the eligibility criteria. Such cases will be assessed on an individual basis, in consultation with the Head of Housing Support Services.

9 Referrals, Application Process and Financial Thresholds

- 9.1 Residents can initiate the aids and adaptations process for aids and adaptations by requesting for an OT assessment from RBKC's Social Services.
- 9.2 No adaptations will be installed without an OT's assessment and recommendation.

Council Tenants

- 9.3 For tenants in council-owned accommodation, financial assistance for adaptations is provided by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Private Sector Tenants, Leaseholders, Owner-Occupiers, and RP Tenants

- 9.4 Financial assistance is provided under the DFG. An OT assessment must first be completed, and formal permission from the property owner or landlord is required before adaptations can be installed.
- 9.5 The A&A Team will support the resident through the DFG application process and oversee the adaptations.
- 9.6 For residents in housing associations like Octavia or Notting Hill Genesis, a copy of the OT's assessment will be forwarded to the registered provider to progress the DFG application. This arrangement may change, and the policy will be updated accordingly if it does.

Requests for Assessments

- 9.7 To request an assessment for aids and adaptations, adult residents can:
- Contact RBKC's Social Services team by phone on 020 7361 3013,
 - Make a request email via to socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk, or
 - Self-refer for an assessment on the RBKC Social Services website here: [Adult Social Care Referral Form - Using this form - Forms \(achieveservice.com\)](https://www.achieveservice.com).
- 9.8 To request an aids and adaptations assessment for children, residents can: email Disabled Children's Team Occupational Therapy team by:
- Phone on 020 7361 2048, or
 - Email - BiBoroughHealthNotifications@rbkc.gov.uk or BiBoroughDCTSupportDuty@rbkc.gov.uk
- 9.9 Residents with additional support needs can also contact the Social Services team for guidance and assistance with completing the referral form.

The A&A Team's Role

- 9.10 The A&A Team will assist residents by:
- Offering personalised advice based on the resident's support needs.
 - Helping with paperwork for applications, especially where residents have support needs.
 - Planning specifications and obtaining estimates from specialist contractors.
 - Advising residents on funding options and monitoring the work to ensure it meets appropriate standards and regulations.
 - Keeping residents informed on the progress and completion of works.

Adaptation Categories and Financial Thresholds

9.11 The adaptations provided under the DFG and the Council's Aids and Adaptations Policy will fall within the following categories:

- **Minor Adaptations:** These adaptations **cost up to £1,000**.
- **Major Adaptations:** These adaptations **exceed £1,000**.

9.12 The maximum funding threshold for adaptations is £30,000. Adaptations above the value of £30,000 will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

9.13 In council-owned properties, discretionary funding of up to £15,000 may be available for adaptations exceeding £30,000, subject to approval by from the Assistant Director of Resident Services and Director of Housing Management.

9.14 For works in RP, leaseholder, owner-occupier and private sector properties, the landlord is responsible for covering the costs of adaptations exceeding £30,000.

9.15 Where the landlord/property owner of a property is unable to cover the costs of adaptations that exceed £30,000, the DFG can provide an additional discretionary £15,000 towards the cost of the adaptations. This will also be subject to additional approval from Head of Housing Support Services in Housing Management/Assistant Director of Resident Services.

9.16 For adaptation works beyond the value of £45,000, alternative housing options would need to be explored by the landlord/property owner.

10 Exclusions and Restrictions

10.1 There are certain circumstances where RBKC may not fulfil a resident's request for aids and adaptations, even if they meet the eligibility criteria. The key exclusions and restrictions are as follows:

- **Temporary Accommodation:** No adaptations will be installed in temporary accommodation owned by third parties. The Council may consider installing minor adaptations in Council owned temporary accommodation on a case-by-case basis.
- **Major Repairs:** Major adaptations will not be carried out in properties that are due to undergo significant repairs.
- **Rehousing:** Major adaptations will not be approved where the resident is due to be rehoused. This includes cases where the tenant has an active mutual exchange application.

- **Right to Buy Applications:** Residents who have submitted a Right to Buy application will not be eligible for major adaptations.
- **Medical Procedures:** Residents who are scheduled to undergo medical procedures that are expected to improve their mobility may not be approved for major adaptations.
- **Visitors:** Adaptations will not be installed for the benefit of a visitor, unless there is clear evidence that the visitor intends to stay for the next five years and the landlord or property owner provides express consent.
- **Risk of Repossession:** Requests for major adaptations may be refused if there is a potential risk of repossession due to legal action.

10.2 Adaptations in communal areas (e.g., stairlifts for communal staircases) will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Introductory Tenancies

10.3 Major adaptations will generally not be approved for Council residents holding an introductory tenancy. However, subject to approval in exceptional cases, the Council can install adaptations for this category of residents.

10.4 For new tenants and tenants transferring to an RBKC property, including those on introductory tenancies from an RP, a Housing Health and Disability Occupational Therapist ('Housing OT') will accompany the tenant during the viewing to assess and identify any necessary adaptations to meet their needs.

10.5 Based on the urgency of the adaptations and the suitability of the property in relation to the tenants needs, the Housing OT will either refer directly to the A&A Team for the adaptations to be installed prior to the tenant moving in, or refer to ASC for adaptations to be installed after the tenant has moved in.

11 Asbestos

11.1 Before any major adaptation works are carried out, the property must be inspected for asbestos. The process differs based on the type of accommodation:

- For Council Tenants: The A&A Team will arrange for an asbestos check in the area of the property where the adaptations are planned.
- For Leaseholders, Owner-Occupiers and Leaseholders, Private Sector and RP Tenants: The property owner or RP is responsible for organising an asbestos survey and ensuring any necessary asbestos removal before works commence.

11.2 If asbestos is found in the area where adaptations are planned, the works will be delayed until the asbestos is safely removed.

11.3 For private sector tenants, owner-occupiers and leaseholders, the landlord must provide the A&A Team with an asbestos inspection report and evidence of asbestos removal before adaptation works can proceed.

12 Minor Adaptations

12.1 Minor adaptations are small-scale modifications that are intended to improve accessibility and safety for residents. These adaptations, with a maximum cost of £1,000, may include the following modifications:

- Handrails
- Grab rails
- Ramps
- Lever taps

12.2 For Council Tenants: The A&A Team at RBKC is responsible for managing and implementing minor adaptations in council-owned properties.

12.3 For Private Sector, RP Tenants, Owner-Occupiers, and Leaseholders: RBKC will provide funding for minor adaptations under the DFG, but the landlord/owner/RP is responsible for their installation. The RBKC OT will send a request form to the landlord, owner, or RP for their action.

13 Major Adaptations

13.1 Major adaptations involve larger-scale modifications that typically require structural changes to a property and have a cost exceeding £1,000.

13.2 Major adaptations may include, but are not limited to:

- Stairlifts
- Through-floor lifts
- Level access showers
- Full kitchen adaptations
- Door widening
- Ceiling track hoists
- Wash-dry toilets

- Wet rooms

13.3 Major adaptations are considered when there are no viable alternatives to address a resident's accessibility needs. RBKC will assess whether rehousing the resident might be a more suitable solution before proceeding with major adaptations.

13.4 For Council Tenants, if rehousing is not an option, RBKC will evaluate the necessity of major adaptations based on the property type, the nature of the adaptation, and the available budget.

13.5 All major adaptations will be carried out according to the recommendations made by the OT. The Council will not accommodate private requests for modifications or adaptations beyond what has been recommended by the OT.

14 Defect Period and Warranty

14.1 All adaptations funded and installed by RBKC or through the DFG are covered by a 12-month defect period.

14.2 During this time, any faults or issues with the installation should be reported to the A&A Team for resolution.

- Residents can report defects during the warranty period by:
 - Calling 020 8964 6141, or
 - Emailing HousingAdaptations@rbkc.gov.uk

After the Defect Period

14.3 For Council Tenants: Once the 12-month defect period has ended, any further issues should be reported to the RBKC Repairs Team through the Customer Service Centre, either by:

- Calling 0800 137 111, or
- Emailing hm-customerservices@rbkc.gov.uk

14.4 For RP and Private Tenants: Tenants in these properties should report any defects outside of the 12-month period to their respective landlord or RP. If the issue is not resolved within a reasonable time, tenants can escalate the matter to the RBKC A&A Team to further assist in compelling the landlord/RP to act.

14.5 For Owner-Occupiers and Leaseholders: This category of residents should make their own repair arrangements to address the defects discovered outside of the

12-month period. The A&A Team can provide advice on repairs where requested.

Damage Caused by Residents

- 14.6 Any damage to adaptations caused by tenants will not be classified as defects.
- 14.7 Council tenants should report such damage to the RBKC Repairs Team using the contact details above.
- 14.8 Repairs required as a result of damage caused by Council tenants may be rechargeable. Further information on rechargeable repairs can be found in the Council's [Housing Management Repairs Recharge Policy](#).
- 14.9 Damage to adaptations caused by an RP or private tenant, leaseholder or owner-occupier should be addressed by the property owner/landlord.

15 Means Testing and Financial Contributions

- 15.1 Financial contributions towards the cost of adaptations may be required from some residents, depending on their financial circumstances.
- 15.2 The DFG for major adaptations for private tenants, leaseholders and owner occupiers will be subject to a means test.
- 15.3 The DFG means test takes into account the income and savings of the applicant. If the applicant is part of a couple, joint income and savings will be considered.

Exemptions

- 15.4 For adaptations recommended for a child under 18, no means testing is required, and financial contributions will not be requested.
- 15.5 Residents who receive certain means-tested benefits will not be required to make any contributions towards the cost of adaptations. These benefits include:
- Universal Credit
 - Income Support
 - Income-based employment and support allowance (not contribution-based ESA)
 - Income-based job seekers allowance (not contribution based JSA)
 - Guaranteed pension credit
 - Working Tax Credits where the household earns no more than £15,050 per annum.

- Child Tax Credit where the household earns no more than £15,050 per annum.
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Reduction

15.6 All DFG applicants who are subject to means testing must complete a Test of Resources form (see [Appendix 1](#)) before works commence. This form will be assessed by the Grants Officer to determine the level of financial contribution, if any, that the applicant is required to make.

16 Timescales

16.1 The A&A Team will aim to complete standard adaptations, such as wet floor showers, within 12 months of receiving a referral from ASC. The Team will work proactively to ensure that residents are kept informed throughout the process, from referral to completion.

16.2 For complex or multiple adaptations within the same property, additional time for planning and specification may be required. In such cases, the A&A Team aims to set realistic and achievable completion timescales and will clearly communicate this to the resident.

16.3 Residents will receive timely updates on any changes to the original timescales, the reasons for delays, and the next steps.

16.4 Further information regarding the key stages involved in the aids and adaptations process can be found in the 'Home Adaptations Key Stages' leaflets in [Section 3 'Related Documents'](#).

17 Removals and Voids

17.1 Adaptations are generally installed with the intention of being long-term or permanent, however, the Council recognises that there may be cases where they need to be removed, particularly when a property becomes vacant (this is known as a 'void').

Private Sector, RP, Leaseholder and Owner-Occupier Accommodation

17.2 The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) does not cover the cost of removing adaptations. Any removal costs for adaptations in private, RP, leaseholder or owner-occupier accommodation must be covered wholly by the landlord, property owner or RP.

Council Properties

- 17.3 For council-owned adapted voids, RBKC will aim to retain the adaptations wherever possible, seeking to match the property with a new tenant who would benefit from the installed adaptations.
- 17.4 The RBKC Mechanical and Electrical Team or the Resident Safety Contracts and Compliance Team may request the removal of existing adaptations, such as stairlifts or ceiling track hoists, if they are not required by the new tenant. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

18 Residents Installing Own Adaptations

- 18.1 Any adaptations planned by tenants in Council owned accommodation and leaseholders will be subject to the conditions in RBKC's [Improvements to Your Home Policy](#). The Improvements to Your Home Policy outlines how RBKC tenants and leaseholders can obtain permission to carry out certain works, which works are permitted and not permitted, and elements that must be considered by the residents before commencing the works.

19 Complaints

- 19.1 RBKC aims to provide a high-quality aids and adaptations service. However, if residents are dissatisfied with any aspect of the process, they can lodge a complaint through the appropriate channels:
- **OT Assessments:** Complaints related to the OT's assessment and recommendations will be addressed through the Adult Social Care Feedback Process. Complaints can be submitted via email to: ASCCustomerEngagement@rbkc.gov.uk.
 - **Joint Complaints:** Where a complaint involves both the OT Complex Team and the Aids & Adaptations (A&A) Team, a coordinated response will be provided by the managers of both teams.
 - **Adaptations, Waiting Times, and the DFG:** Complaints about delays in adaptations, DFG applications, or other related matters should be directed to the A&A Team. These complaints will be handled according to the RBKC Complaints Procedure.
 - **RP or Private Sector Tenants:** Complaints related to adaptations within RP or private sector properties should initially be raised with the respective landlord or RP who should address the matter in line with their own procedures. If the

issue remains unresolved, the Council's A&A Team may assist in escalating the matter with the RP, where appropriate.

19.2 Complaints about services provided by RBKC's A&A Team can be submitted to the Housing Management Customer Experience Team by emailing HM-Complaints@rbkc.gov.uk.

19.3 All complaints will be handled in line with the [Council's Housing Management Complaints Policy](#).

20 Equalities Statement

The Council is committed to promoting fair and equal access to services and equal opportunities in employment, the procurement of goods and as a community leader. The Council's policies, procedures and day to day practices have been established to promote an environment which is free from unlawful and unfair discrimination, while valuing the diversity of all people.

Discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexuality, disability and age is not acceptable: the Council will take action to ensure no person using the council's premises or services receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by requirements or conditions that cannot be justified. The Council will tackle inequality, treat all people with dignity and respect and continue to work to improve services for all service users.

The legal framework for the Council's approach is provided by the Equality Act 2010 and specifically by the Public Sector Equality Duty, under which a public authority must work consciously to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with differing characteristics.

Further detail on the Duty, and the Council's approach to fulfilling its requirements, can be found at www.rbkc.gov.uk.

21 GDPR & Data Protection

As a directorate of RBKC, Housing Management shares the commitment to ensure that all data is:

- Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
- Collected for a specific and legitimate purpose and not used for anything other than this stated purpose, or as provided for in our privacy and fair processing notices

- Relevant and limited to whatever the requirements are for which the data is processed.
- Accurate, and where necessary, kept up to date. Any identified inaccuracies will be amended or removed without undue delay.
- stored for as long as required, as specified within RBKC's Records Retention policy.
- Secured with appropriate solutions, which protect the data against unauthorised or unlawful processing and accidental loss, destruction or damage.

For further information about the Council's commitment to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), visit the Council's website at www.rbkc.gov.uk.

22 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every five years or sooner if there are significant changes in legislation, regulations, or operational requirements that impact the aids and adaptations process. The next review will take place by: **January 2030**

23 Appendices

23.1 Appendix 1 – Preliminary Test of Resources Form: [Test of Resources Form - Guide to DFG process and Preliminary Means Test - 3 June 24.docx](#)

23.2 Appendix 2 – DFG Application Form for Owner Occupiers and Private Tenants: [DFG Application Form \(Owner Occupiers & PRS Tenants\)- 3 June 24.docx](#)

23.3 Appendix 3 – DFG Application Form for Registered Provider Landlords: [DFG Application Form for RP Landlords - 3 June 24.docx](#)

23.4 Appendix 4 – Home Improvement Grants & Assistance Information Sheet: [Home Improvement Grants & Assistance \(DFG\).pdf](#)