

Manchester City Council Housing Services

Aids and Adaptations Policy

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Approved by:	Strategic Lead Asset & Repairs
Author:	Rose Rossette, Asset Manager
Policy owner:	Paul Hare, Head of Asset Management
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CONTENTS

	Title	Page Numbers
1.	Introduction	3
2.	Policy statement	3
3.	Roles and Responsibilities	3 - 4
4.	Our Residents	4 – 5
5.	Legal and Regulatory Framework	5 – 6
6.	Equality Diversity and Inclusion	7
7.	Adaptations Overview	7 - 8
8.	Eligibility	8 – 9
9.	Types of Aids and Adaptations	9 - 11
10.	Properties that cannot be adapted	11
11.	Housing Register Applicants	11
12.	Letting Adapted Properties	12
13.	Tenants Own Aids and Adaptations	12
14.	Complaints	12 - 13
15.	Policy Amendments	13
16.	Review	13

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Manchester City Council (MCC) is committed to supporting residents to live independently, safely, and with dignity in their own homes. This Aids and Adaptations Policy outlines our approach to assessing and delivering practical modifications that meet the diverse needs of our residents. We recognise that timely and appropriate adaptations can significantly enhance quality of life, promote wellbeing, and reduce the need for more intensive support services.

1.2 The objective of the aids and adaptations service is to support MCC's 'A Place Called Home' vision which aims to establish and deliver a resident led housing service that is high on quality and value for Council tenants. MCC is committed to providing a resident- focused aids and adaptations service. Whether through minor adjustments or major works, our goal is to ensure that every eligible individual receives the support they need in a timely and efficient manner, with a focus on safety, independence, and quality of life.

2.0 Policy statement

2.1 MCC is committed to providing a high-quality aids and adaptations service to enable customers to live safely and more independently within their homes.

2.2 For the purpose of this policy, aids and adaptations are defined as items of equipment or special fixtures and alterations which improve access to a resident's home, improve mobility in and around their home, or help with daily living to maintain or enhance their independence, dignity, safety and overall quality of life.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Assistant Director of Housing Services has overall responsibility for approving and ensuring this policy is adhered to. The Strategic Lead Asset & Repairs has responsibility for ensuring the aim and scope of this policy is being adhered to. The Head of Investment and Strategic Asset Management has responsibility for delivering this policy across the MCC portfolio. All MCC Housing Services Staff have the responsibility for adhering to this policy.

3.2 Manchester Equipment and Adaptations Partnership Service (MEAPS) to co-ordinate all requests for aids and adaptations and work where appropriate. MEAPS will ensure that major and minor aids and adaptations and related works are progressed in line with the policy. As required, MEAPS will: make referrals to the Occupational Therapist service (OT); commission a feasibility study for major adaptations that require structural changes; refer to Investment and Strategic Asset Management (ISAM) in circumstances where re-housing needs could be the most viable option; manage the installation of all minor aids and major adaptations to MCC owned properties.

3.3 ISAM will approve all major adaptations prior to commencement and consider whether a property is suitable for any complex major adaptations. MEAPS to provide performance related data monthly. ISAM will be responsible for reporting spend against budget and that the overall spend is within the annual budget based on financial information provided by MEAPS. The ordering or delivery of all major adaptations will first require approval from ISAM. The following KPI will be applied to the delivery of aids and adaptations.

Performance Measure	Target
Minor adaptations completed in time (20 days)	100%
Customer satisfaction with minor adaptations	95%
Major adaptations completed in time (6 months)	100%
Customer satisfaction with major adaptations	95%

3.4 MEAPS is to provide the housing services Compliance Team all information relating to installed equipment so that the compliance team can ensure it is maintained, serviced and all statutory inspections are completed.

4.0 Our Residents

4.1 We will provide a fair and easily accessible aids and adaptations service to customers that promotes choice and encourages independent living. We will provide an annual budget identified within the Planned Investment Plan (PIP), which will be used as efficiently as possible to provide a fair and accessible service.

4.2 Our [website](#) provides helpful information on how to progress any aids and adaptation requirements.

4.3 If residents want to get in touch, they can contact us via one of the options below:

- **Completing a web form** on our [Website](#)
- By **emailing us** at mcchscontact@manchester.gov.uk
- Contacting us via [Facebook](#)
- **Telephoning** our Customer Service Centre on 03000 123 123 (open 08:30-16:30 Monday to Friday)
- **Visiting us** in person – Whitemoss Road Housing office is open Mon, Tues, Weds, Fri – 9am–4pm and Cheetham Hill Housing office is open Thursdays between 9am-4pm

4.4 If further support and guidance is required, our partner, MEAPS, can provide further clarity on the services we offer and how our customers can learn more about the aids and adaptations service they require. MEAPS can be contacted on 0161 234 5001 or email: mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk

The Residents Voice Group have been consulted with to create this policy.

5.0 Legal and Regulatory Framework

5.1 In determining this policy regard has been given to the Council's Allocations Policy alongside the Regulatory Framework for Social Landlords, which states that Registered Providers shall:

(i) Offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community and the efficient use of their housing stock.

(ii) Co-operate with the local authorities' strategic housing function and their duties to meet identified local housing needs. This includes assistance with the local authorities' homelessness duties and through meeting obligations in nominations agreements.

(iii) Co-operate with relevant organisations to provide an adaptations service that meets tenants' needs.

(iv) Develop and deliver services to address under-occupation and overcrowding in their homes within the resources available to them. These services should be focused on the needs of the tenants and will offer choices to them.

(v) Provide tenants wishing to move with access to clear and relevant information about their housing options.

5.2 The Equality Act 2010 includes a duty for public bodies when carrying out their functions to have due regard to eliminate discrimination and promote equality and the Council will strive to achieve this wherever possible.

5.3 Discrimination on grounds of disability can be justified in law if the council has appropriately balanced the needs of the person with a disability and those of others in need of accommodation. Making better overall use of the housing stock and meeting more needs, including those with disabilities, is a legitimate aim.

5.4 The Equality Act 2010 'Duty to make Reasonable Adjustments' applies to Landlords and Managers of rented premises or premises available to rent. This duty is not anticipatory – it only arises if the Council are requested to make an adjustment by a person to whom the premises are let or by someone on their behalf.

5.5 There are two requirements under the Act:

(i) Providing auxiliary aids and services

(ii) Changing provisions, criteria or practices (e.g. allowing a disabled person who uses an assistance dog to take a property that might otherwise have stipulated 'no dogs')

5.6 There is no legal requirement under the Equality Act for the Council to make any changes which would consist of or include the removal or alteration of a physical feature of the property which includes:

(i) Any feature arising from the design or construction of a building

(ii) Any feature of any approach to exit from or access to a building

(iii) Any fixtures or fittings in or on a premises

(iv) Any other physical element or quality

5.7 The cost of adaptations and the suitability of the current accommodation (including under occupation) are relevant factors when considering

proportionality. Alternative means of meeting needs other than adapting the current property include transfers to more suitable accommodation or tenants contributing to costs may also be considered.

6.0 Equality Diversity and Inclusion

6.1 MCC will deliver an aids and adaptations service which considers residents' particular needs and circumstances. It will ensure that all residents are able to access services, and that their homes are maintained to modern standards. MCC will follow the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

6.2 MCC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people vulnerable adults and expects all staff and contractors to share this commitment. MCC will follow the safeguarding policy.

6.3 MCC and its partnering contractors have a role in identifying domestic abuse and supporting people affected. Where there are domestic abuse concerns, staff will follow the domestic abuse policy and safeguarding policy.

7.0 Adaptations Overview

7.1 The purpose and reasons for adapting Council properties mirrors those MEAPS provide across other housing providers and the private sector.

7.2 Aids and adaptations to Council properties are divided into 2 broad categories: minor and major adaptations. The type and value of the work will determine into which category it falls.

7.3 The annual funding for aids and adaptations is a fixed amount and all adaptations are subject to budget availability.

7.4 The Council will normally separate the annual aids and adaptations budget into two budget allocations, one for minor adaptations, the other for major adaptations. The budget split will be agreed annually.

7.5 Where budgets allow, the Council will fund major adaptations, the normal maximum value being £30,000. However, the Council will apply discretionary assistance up to a maximum of £100,000 which will be considered by the

Assistant Director of Housing Services. The Council will not normally contribute to costs above this figure unless under exceptional circumstances.

7.6 If the value of work exceeds the upper limit and the tenant is unable or unwilling to meet the additional costs then the adaptation work may not be completed and alternative solutions to meeting the housing need maybe investigated.

7.7 The Council will obtain value for money in respect of all adaptations. The Council's Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure rules will be followed.

8.0 Eligibility

8.1 Who is eligible? Aids and Adaptations will only be considered for MCCHS tenants, their partner or a member of the immediate family who is a permanent resident in the household.

8.2 Adaptations for children of tenants will only be completed at the property which is the principal home.

8.3 Who is not eligible?

Adaptations will not be funded by MCCHS for homes which:

- have a live Right to Buy, Voluntary Right to Buy or Right to Acquire application
- have a demoted or starter tenancy
- are leasehold
- are shared ownership
- are not owned by MCC
- Where a home has been built with, or subsequently benefitted from, significant investment in adaptations, it will normally be exempt from purchase by the customer through the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire scheme.

8.4 MCCHS reserves the right to refuse to fund or provide permission for adaptations for a number of reasons including:

- where there is no record of the person requiring the adaptation being formally recorded as resident in the relevant home

- where the adaptation appears to be principally to reduce an overcrowding situation caused by the customer's change in circumstances since being granted the tenancy
- where the needs of the household could be more reasonably satisfied by the customer transferring to more suitable accommodation being provided by The Council.
- where the works are not appropriate for the property or appear unreasonable
- where the customer is actively seeking rehousing
- where there has been a serious breach of tenancy resulting in a legal notice being served
- where the home is scheduled for demolition or disposal

9.0 Types of Aids and Adaptations

9.1 MCCHS categorises requests for aids and adaptations as either minor or major with the distinction being based on the cost, nature and complexity of the work required.

9.2 Minor Aids and Adaptations

Small scale adaptations are those that typically cost £1000 or less to supply and install. They include grab rails, handrails, lever taps and will be accepted directly from customers and provided free of charge with trusted assessors available to provide advice and guidance around suitability and installation.

9.3 Major Adaptations

Major adaptations will be those that typically cost over £1000. They will be referred to an Assessment Officer (AO) or Occupational Therapist (OT) for an assessment of need and recommended works.

An AO or OT will assess the applicant's needs, this may include working with other health professionals, such as a medical consultant or GP. If appropriate, the AO or OT will then submit a completed adaptation assessment of need to The Council's Manchester Equipment and Adaptation Partnership (MEAPS) for consideration.

9.4 Consideration of the Completed Assessment of Need

MEAPS will need to satisfy itself that the adaptation work recommended is both necessary and appropriate and reasonable & practicable. To determine this the Council will consider the following.

- (i) The total value of the proposed adaptation (including design costs, Building Regs, etc)
- (ii) Whether the property is suitable for building alterations as determined by The Council
- (iii) The occupants' status, the type of tenancy held and any pending possession action.
- (iv) The person's wider physical health needs and the length of time that they will remain in the property

9.5 Funding and prioritisation

MCCHS will set an annual aids and adaptations budget. This is cost limited, but demand led.

Where the number of applicants exceeds the available budget, a list will be maintained and worked through in date order i.e., work will be undertaken to the home of the applicant whose application is dated the earliest. However, delays in ordering specialist equipment, requesting architectural drawings, applying for planning permission and the sourcing of a suitable contractor could also impact this.

In exceptional circumstances and where the Occupational Therapist or hospital doctor recommends that work should be completed as a matter of urgency to address an acute medical priority or to accelerate discharge from hospital, then that applicant's case will be placed above all others on the list.

10. Properties that cannot be adapted

10.1 If an applicant with an adaptation need is living in a property assessed as not being suitable to adapt, the applicant will be encouraged to join the Council's Housing Register and seek alternative accommodation. Through the Lettings Policy, the applicant will be prioritised to ensure they are considered for accommodation suitable for their needs.

10.2 The Council has number of properties with major adaptations. To try and make the best use of the housing stock, when a property with pre-existing adaptations becomes vacant it will normally be ring-fenced to housing applicants with adaptation needs.

11. Housing Register Applicants

11.1 Applicants on the Housing Register who are not existing Council tenants will normally only be considered for properties that are suitable for their needs, i.e. those with suitable pre-existing adaptations.

Exceptions to this include:

- (i) Where an applicant needs minor adaptation(s)
- (ii) Where a property is part adapted, and further adaptations are considered reasonable to make the property suitable for the applicant's needs. For example, a bungalow with ramped access and a wet room installed but needs door widening to make it suitable for a wheelchair user.

To understand their needs an applicant will normally be advised to contact the Occupational Therapy Service. To ensure we are considering an applicant for accommodation that is both safe and suitable for their needs the applicant will not normally be eligible to bid for properties until confirmation of their needs has been received.

12. Letting Adapted Properties

12.1 When an adapted property becomes vacant it will be advertised and made available to applicants on the Housing Register with the adaptation need. If the property advert fails to find a suitable applicant, the property may be readvertised until a suitable applicant is identified.

12.2 In exceptional circumstances, where a property has adaptations that make it particularly suitable for an applicant the property may be allocated to that applicant on a 'Direct Let' basis.

12.3 If an adapted property is let to an applicant who does not need the adaptation the applicant will accept the property on the basis that the adaptation will remain in the property. For example, if a level access shower is

fitted it will not be replaced for a bath. The only exception to this is where a stair lift is fitted, this will be removed upon request.

13. Tenants Own Aids and Adaptations

13.1 In some circumstances tenants may wish to install their own aids and adaptations, such as a shower over bath or stair lift. The Council will need to give the tenant permission in writing through its Permissions Procedure. Introductory tenants may be able to undertake these works if supporting evidence is provided from their Occupational Therapist or General Practitioner.

13.2 Aids and adaptations installed by a tenant will not be maintained by the Council. The tenant will be responsible for any servicing or repair costs. Likewise, any Planning or Building Regulation fees and costs will be met by the tenant.

13.3 In the case of tenant installed aids and adaptations, at the end of the tenancy the tenant will be required to remove them and make good any damage to the property. Alternatively, if the Council agrees to take responsibility for the alterations the tenant will be asked to sign over ownership free of charge

14. Complaints

14.1 Where a tenant is dissatisfied, they can raise a formal complaint by:

- **Completing a web form** on our [Website](#)
- **By emailing us** at mcchscontact@manchester.gov.uk

14.2 If after receiving the Council's response the complainant is still dissatisfied, they can write to the Housing Ombudsman.

15. Policy Amendments

15.1 The Assistant Director of Housing Services has delegated authority to make minor policy amendments which do not affect the broad thrust of policy direction. Other changes must be approved by the appropriate Council Committee.

16. Review

16.1 There will be a review of this policy whenever there is a fundamental change of legislative or regulatory provisions, or when other information becomes available, that will influence the policy, such as the outcome of a service review. Irrespective of this, there will be a review of the policy every two years.