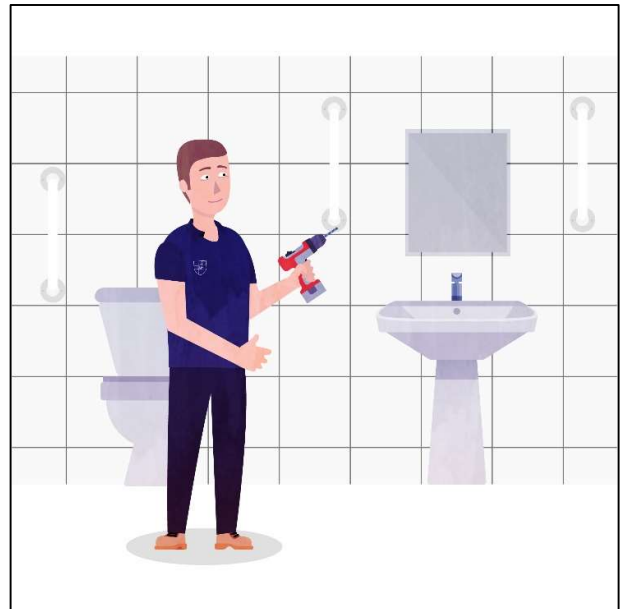
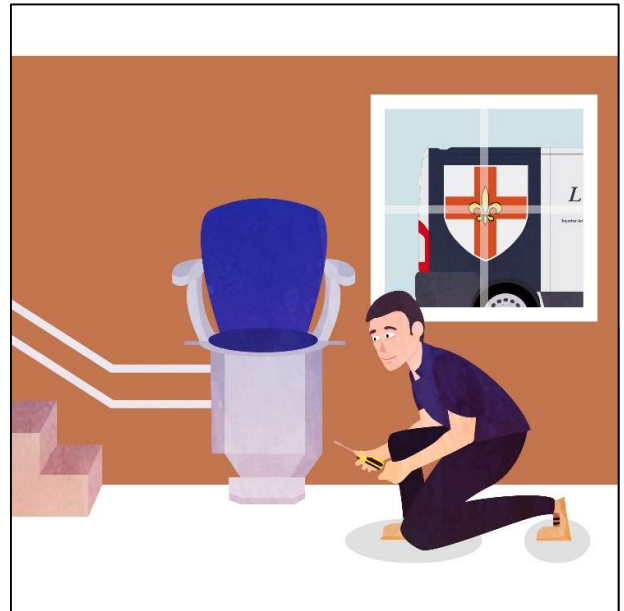




Housing Repairs Service

Aids and Adaptions Policy



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Introduction

At the City of Lincoln Council (CoLC), we understand everyone's housing needs are different. The CoLC offers our tenants with permanent and temporary adaptations to their homes to ensure that they are suitable for their individual needs. The CoLC works with partners and agencies, including Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) to provide adaptations to its housing stock. If an adaptation is assessed as being necessary and appropriate by an Occupational Therapist it will be referred to the CoLC who will determine whether the request is "reasonable and practicable." If it is, the CoLC will install the adaptation.

This document sets out the City of Lincoln Council's policy for the provision of aids and adaptations to the homes of tenants living in Council accommodation.

Aims and objectives of the policy

The City of Lincoln Council is committed to ensuring that Council tenants and their immediate families who have a disability can, as far as possible, continue to live safely and independently and carry out essential day-to-day activities.

Let's deliver quality housing

- ▶ **Let's provide housing which meets the varied needs of our residents**
- ▶ **Let's work together to tackle homelessness in Lincoln**
- ▶ **Let's improve housing standards for all**
- ▶ **Let's build thriving communities**
- ▶ **Let's help people have a sense of belonging**



The key objectives of this policy are to:

- Provide a high-quality aids and adaptation service to enable tenants with a disability and their immediate families to live safely and independently in their own homes.
- Provide an efficient and cost-effective adaptations service making the best use of the Council housing stock and the budget available, whilst ensuring value for money.
- Assist those in need of adaptations to make informed choices about their housing options, facilitating transfers to more appropriate accommodations where required.
- Raise awareness of the availability of the aids and adaptations service.
- Set out the Council's approach on effectively and consistently handling requests for aids and adaptations.

Diversity and inclusion

The CoLC will ensure that the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion are integral in the business planning and delivery of the Aids and Adaptations service. The CoLC is committed to delivering its Aids and Adaptations service in a way that meets the diverse needs of local communities and will achieve this by treating people fairly and taking the nine protected

characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 into consideration in all aspects of the Aids and Adaptations service including access to the service.

Regulatory requirements

In July 2023, the Social Housing (Regulation) Act received Royal Assent in Parliament making a host of reforms to sector law. One of these reforms will be to empower the Regulator of Social Housing to proactively monitor and drive landlords' compliance with enhanced consumer standards.

A consultation was published seeking input on a set of consumer standards that are likely to apply from April 2024 ([Consumer standards consultation publishing.service.gov.uk](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/consultations/consumer-standards-consultation)). The four standards are below:

- **The Safety and Quality Standard** - requires landlords to provide safe and good quality homes and landlord services to tenants.
- **The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard** - requires landlords to be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, when necessary, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account.
- **The Neighbourhood and Community Standard** - requires landlords to engage with other relevant parties so that tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their homes.
- **The Tenancy Standard** - sets requirements for the fair allocation and letting of homes and for how those tenancies are managed and ended by landlords.



Further information on the home standard is available at-
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-standard>



Our responsibilities

Registered providers shall:

- Provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers the choice to, tenants and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements "right first time".
- Meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.

Specific expectations relating to the repair and maintenance are that:

- Registered providers shall ensure a prudent, planned approach to repairs and maintenance of homes and communal areas. This should demonstrate an appropriate balance of planned and responsive repairs and value for money. The approach should include responsive and cyclical repairs, planned and capital work, work on empty properties, and adaptations.
- Registered providers shall cooperate with relevant organisations to provide an adaptation service that meets the tenant's needs.

Definition of aids and adaptations

For the purpose of this policy, an aid or adaptation is defined as the provision of fixed equipment and/or modification to the property (or associated land) which enables tenants or other members of the household to continue to live independently and safely in their home.

Minor adaptations

Involve small-scale, usually non-structural, alterations or additions to a property. Examples of this type of work include:

- ▶ Lever operated taps
- ▶ Handrails
- ▶ Grab-rails
- ▶ Mixer showers
- ▶ Concrete half-steps
- ▶ Additional external lighting

Major adaptations

Involve larger schemes of work and will often involve structural alterations. Types of major adaptations include:

- ▶ Ramps
- ▶ Stairlifts
- ▶ Low level access showers (wet room) and over bath showers
- ▶ Extensions to the family home
- ▶ Hard standing and dropped kerbs
- ▶ Property alterations, for example to widen doorways and alterations to kitchens

Service Delivery

How to get an aids and adaptations referral

Tenants of any age (or members of their household) can apply for an adaptation for themselves. However, there must be a proven need. If it is considered that the scope of the work required is more complex and a full assessment of need is required, then the case will be referred to the Occupational Therapy service for that area for a full assessment. Upon receipt of an Occupational Therapist referral, the Aids and Adaptations Team Leader will write to the tenant confirming receipt of the referral and provide a point of contact for the case. If more than one member of the household is disabled and requires adaptations to meet their needs. Each person will need a separate Occupational Therapy assessment.

The policy and procedure recognise the following referral routes:

Hospital referral - Adaptation works recommended by a hospital Occupational Therapist, resulting from a full property assessment as part of discharge planning, will be considered by the Council.

LCC occupational therapy referral - This will be the principal referral route for all major adaptations. The Occupational Therapy service will assess the requirements and needs of the tenant, using the recognised Adult Social Care and Health eligibility criteria and associated Policy and Procedural Guidance. The Council will then consider the referral.

Disability - Specific key workers - Where the Council receives a request directly through an organisation representing a person with a specific disability / sensory impairment to supply and fit

specialist equipment, the CoLC will decide if the works can proceed in accordance with the provisions of this policy. Such organisations include the Deaf and Visual Impairment Team from LCC.

The Council will reserve the right in some cases to refer the request directly to an appropriate agency for further assessment.

Approval of work

In all cases, the Council will consider the following before approving a scheme based on the Occupational therapists advice:

- If the requested, adaptation is reasonable and practicable, having regard to the age and character of the property.
- The likely medical prognosis and the long-term usability of the proposed adaptation(s).
- The needs of the tenant, or member of the household and any personal factors that demonstrate a need to remain in their existing accommodation.
- The cost of the adaptations necessary to the current property.
- Any under-occupation of the present accommodation.
- Property type and demand.
- The likely availability of more appropriate alternative accommodation.
- Assessments of properties above the ground floor. Where Occupational Therapy recommendations are for properties above ground floor level, consideration should be made by the relevant housing officers. Any additional needs of the householder are recognised, and an assessment is made of any other measures that may need to be taken.
- Consideration of PEEPS and evacuation processes should also be considered.

Approval of major adaptations will be made on the condition that:

- An Occupational Therapist completes an 'Assessment of Need' which outlines clear recommendations that the work is necessary to sustain independent living.
- An assessment is carried out with the tenant to check whether a move to a more suitable property may resolve the need for adaptations and present a better long-term solution to their household's circumstances; the proposed works comply with all Planning Permission and Building Regulations requirements.
- If major adaptation works are not reasonable or practicable for a tenant's home, the Council will work closely with the tenant and other agencies to find a more suitable property to ensure the best use of the housing stock, whilst considering the needs of the household

Timescales of work

All works are dealt with on a referral date order basis. However, if the occupational therapist assesses the priority need as urgent, this assessment will influence the priority given to the works. In addition, the Council may prioritise works when the availability of resources is a factor in order to maximise the Council's resources.



The tenant will be given an indication of the timescale in which it is anticipated the works will start and be completed, the name of the contractor, and the contact telephone number for the Aids and Adapts Team Leader.

The Council will endeavour to ensure that procedures do not add unnecessary delays during the consideration of a referral for aids and adaptations. In addition, the undertaking of works is subject to the availability of funding.

Tenant liaison

The CoLC will aim:

- To arrange suitable appointments for contractors to gain entry and proceed with the works.
- To notify the tenant that they may be considered for a transfer to a more suitable property that would better meet their needs.
- To publicise the adaptations service by giving information packs to all tenants using or planning to use the service.
- To consult with and notify all tenants at key stages throughout the adaptation process.
- To advise the tenant as to the extent of the work to be undertaken.
- To advise the tenant of the timescale for the work and update them if this changes
- To notify the tenant of which contractor has been instructed to do the work
- To ensure the tenant is satisfied with the adaptation completed.

Performance management

There are a number of indicators recorded in respect of repairs and maintenance. Performance figures are presented to Housing Services Team, Lincoln Tenants Panel, Performance Scrutiny Committee and Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee. Targets for the aids and adaptations team in 2023/24 are as follows:

- ▶ 8-week average time to complete major works.
- ▶ 4-week average time to complete minor works.



Funding

The CoLC will usually fund works up to the value of £10,000. Work that is in excess of this value must be approved by the Assistant Director of Housing and investment to allow for a budget to be allocated from within the Contingency Reserve of the Housing Investment Programme.

Work that will not be funded

The Council will not adapt a property when:

- A tenancy does not exist
- The tenant is seeking to move or transfer on the grounds the property is not suitable for their needs.
- A breach of the tenancy agreement exists and possession proceedings against the tenancy have commenced. Unless authority has been granted by Housing Management.
- Where a Right to Buy application has been made.

The Council will not fund non-fixed equipment, including:

- Powered bath-hoists
- Commode chairs
- Specialist toilet seats
- Specialist furniture
- Induction loops
- Mobility scooters



Budget monitoring and review

The Aids and Adaptations budget is managed within the Housing Repairs Account and authorised by the Director of Housing.

The following information will be recorded and retained by the CoLC:

- Number of adaptations installed
- Number and type of adaptations rejected and the reasons why
- Percentage of minor and major adaptations completed within target.

Details of spend and budget commitment will be reported to the Director of Housing by the Housing Repairs Service Manager(HRSM). Any request for budget increases will be made by the HRSM. The Council will aim to ensure that adequate resources are provided to meet the adaptation needs of its tenants and to make the best use of any adapted properties that become vacant.

Servicing and maintenance of equipment

The CoLC will meet the costs of all routine repairs and maintenance to any equipment it supplies through this policy. The tenant must allow access to any servicing or repairs of equipment. If equipment is wilfully damaged by the tenant, members of their household, or anyone else visiting the property, the CoLC will recharge the tenant for any repairs required (Please refer to the rechargeable repairs policy for more information).

A programme will be in place to undertake annual servicing and maintenance of stair lifts and lifting equipment and assisted door openers.

Installation of aids and adaptations by tenants

A tenant wishing to undertake an adaptation at their own expense is required to make a written request to the CoLC via their Housing Officer (HO) stating the adaptation they wish to carry out. Any adaptation to the property will need written consent from the Council before the work is started.

Following Council approval any installations made by the tenant will be the responsibility of the tenant to maintain and/or remove at the end of the tenancy. Alternatively, if the Council agrees to take responsibility for the alterations the tenant will be required to relinquish ownership at no expense to the CoLC. If the CoLC agrees to the future responsibility of an adaptation this will be stated in the conditions should permission be granted to the tenant to undertake the adaptation.

Alternative solutions

If it is considered by the CoLC that a tenant's needs would be best met through a move to a more suitable property, a priority transfer within the Council's stock will be sought. Alternatively, a priority move to another Registered Social Landlord's property could also be negotiated.

Where a decision is made that a tenant's needs can be best met through a move to a more suitable property, the aids and adaptations officer will liaise with the Housing Officer regarding a management transfer. The tenant can then apply for rehousing through the Homefinder system and submit the relevant case information to support their application. The application will then be assessed and awarded a housing priority in accordance with the allocations policy.



Removal of adaptations

Any adaptation funded or part funded by the CoLC will remain in the property and should not be removed by the tenant or anyone acting on their behalf without the written permission of the CoLC.

Where adaptations have been carried out to a property designated for elderly or disabled people, these will not normally be reversed unless the adaptation has come to the end of its life. For example, if a bath has been replaced with a level access shower.

Where 'General Need's' accommodation has been adapted, the CoLC will seek to find a suitable applicant using the council's approved allocations policy, who will benefit from such adaptations. However, CoLC will consider any application made by a new tenant for the removal of equipment in order to make the property, more habitable.

Transfers after adaptations have been carried out

Following a major adaptation, the CoLC will permit a housing transfer if the individual's needs have changed, and the Occupational Therapist and the CoLC agree a move is necessary. Such as, if the family size changes or there is a need to move into supported housing. Then, if the new home requires any adaptations, the Occupational Therapist and the CoLC will assess any appropriate adaptations, and these will be considered in accordance with this policy. In the event that the person whom the adaptations were installed for is no longer residing in the property, the Council may use discretion and offer the tenant the option of relocating to an un-adapted property.

Letting adapted properties

The Council recognises that the void time is a key stage in the successful delivery of the adaptation process. In order to ensure properties are allocated to make efficient and effective use of the housing stock and reduce costs in delivering adaptations, it is important that key issues have been considered prior to re-letting. The Council will identify details of any major adaptations for all properties that become vacant and will allocate properties to make the most appropriate use of any existing adaptation.

Significantly adapted properties such as properties with internal lifts, wet rooms, or low-level kitchens fitted may be advertised with the adaptations listed to allow the most appropriate applicant to let the property. Where a new tenant who is not disabled accepts an offer to move into an adapted property, adaptations such as level access showers will not usually be removed. In cases where a bath can be fitted over a level access shower consideration will be given.

Recycling adaptations

Where possible, adaptations will be “recycled” on re-letting a property by allocating the adapted property to a person needing the adaptation. If this is not possible, the CoLC has a process to consider removing adaptations from locations where they are no longer required. Examples of equipment that may be removed and recycled include:

- Stairlifts
- Hoists
- Through floor lifts
- Modular ramps

Structural adaptations that have been carried out to a property, such as concrete ramps and level access showers will not be removed. If a new tenant accepts a property that has been adapted, they must accept that the adaptations remain in situ. All adaptations of this nature will be classed as an attribute to the property and treated as such.

Appeals

If a tenant wishes to appeal against any decision taken regarding their requested adaptation, they should contact CoLC asking to request an appeal on the decision, using one of the following methods:

▶ By email to: customerservices@lincoln.gov.uk

▶ By telephoning: 01522 881188

▶ By letter to: Housing Services

City of Lincoln Council,
City Hall,
Beaumont Fee,
Lincoln, LN1 1DD



Upon receipt of the appeal, the maintenance manager will aim to acknowledge the request within 5 working days. The maintenance manager will then consider the appeal and consult with the Aids and Adapts Team Leader and any relevant healthcare professional or other relevant organisations. The maintenance manager will subsequently inform the tenant of their decision within 20 working days of the appeal being lodged.

Complaints

The Aids and Adaptation Policy will aim to bring consistency to the management of adaptations within Council properties. However, if a tenant feels they have cause to complain, procedures are in place to put things right as quickly as possible. If a tenant wishes to register a complaint, they are

encouraged, in the first instance, to contact the Aids and Adapts Team Leader, to allow us to attempt to resolve the situation informally.

If the tenant remains dissatisfied, they can register their complaint through the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure, using one of the following methods:

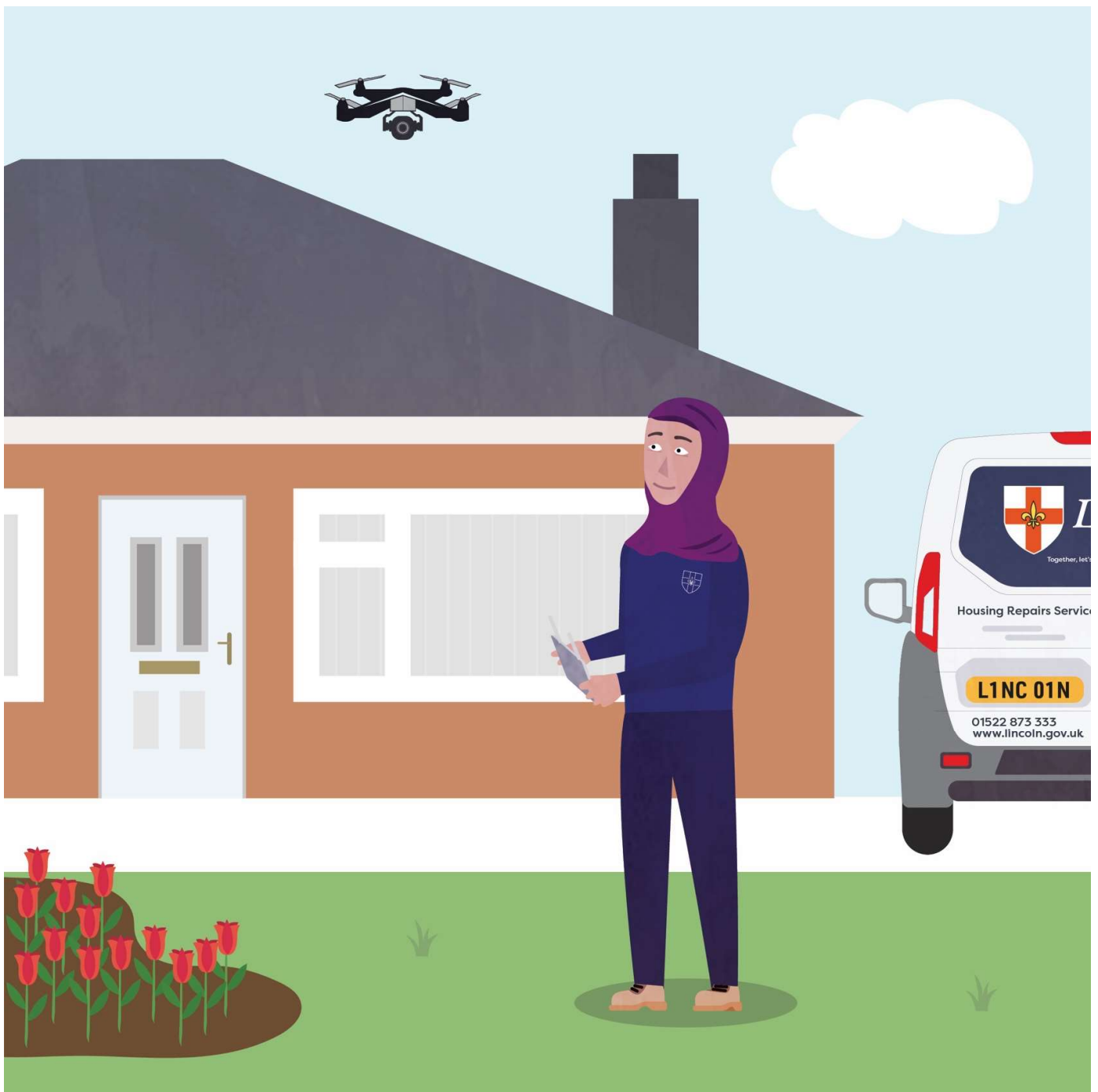
- ▶ Online at: www.lincoln.gov.uk/complaints
- ▶ By email to: complaints@lincoln.gov.uk
- ▶ By telephoning: 01522 881188
- ▶ By letter to: Housing Services

City of Lincoln Council,
City Hall,
Beaumont Fee,
Lincoln, LN1 1DD



We aim to acknowledge and respond to complaints within 10 working days. Further information is available at- <https://www.lincoln.gov.uk/council/compliments-compliments-feedback/3>





Further information

If you have any comments on what you read in this policy, or any service that you receive from the City of Lincoln Council, please let us know. We are interested in any suggestions that you have on how to make this a more user-friendly document.

Email customer.services@lincoln.gov.uk

Tel 01522 873333

Website www.lincoln.gov.uk

Write to DHCS, City of Lincoln Council
City Hall, Beaumont Fee, LN1 1DD