



Aids and Adaptations Policy

This policy was produced in 2026 and is version 4.00

This policy was adopted by Cabinet on xxxx

Review Frequency: MDH will review this Policy every 5 years and as required to address legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational issues. However the Head of Housing and Health is given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the Policy as required by legislative changes, formal guidance or local operational considerations

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy outlines Mid Devon Housing's (MDH) approach to providing aids and adaptations for tenants or their household members who have a disability or long-term ill health in order that they can remain and live independently in their home.
- 1.2 It is recognised that in some instances the accommodation that our tenants live in may no longer be suitable to support their needs and we are committed to providing effective aids and adaptations or alternative suitable accommodation.
- 1.3 This Policy does not cover adaptations installed by the tenant at their own expense; the tenant is required to obtain written permission before carrying out any such works. MDH will only refuse permission with good reason, please refer to the MDH Tenant Alterations and Improvements to Council Property Policy.

2 Aims and Objectives

Aims

- Promote Independent Living: Ensure tenants and permanent household members with disabilities or long-term health conditions can remain in their homes and live independently for as long as possible.
- Maximise Housing Stock Utilisation: Make best use of existing housing stock by considering the suitability of properties for adaptations and ensuring adapted homes are allocated appropriately.
- Provide Accessible Information: Ensure tenants and household members are fully informed about the range of options available, including aids, minor adaptations, major adaptations, and alternative housing solutions.
- Deliver a Fair and Transparent Service: Operate a clear, consistent, and equitable process for assessing and delivering adaptations, ensuring compliance with statutory obligations and best practice.
- Support Partnership Working: Collaborate with health professionals, social care teams, and other relevant agencies to provide holistic solutions tailored to individual needs.
- Ensure Financial Sustainability: Manage limited budgets effectively by prioritising those in greatest need and considering value for money in all decisions.

Objectives

- Clear Guidance: Provide tenants and staff with comprehensive guidance on eligibility, application processes and decision-making criteria for aids and adaptations.
- Efficient Processes: Establish streamlined procedures for assessment, approval, and delivery of adaptations to minimise delays and improve customer satisfaction.
- Compliance and Accountability: Ensure all actions comply with relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998, and building regulations; and maintain accurate records for audit and monitoring.
- Monitoring and Review: Regularly review the Policy and service delivery to ensure effectiveness, fairness, and alignment with changing legislation and best practice.
- Customer Engagement: Encourage feedback from tenants to continuously improve the service and address any concerns promptly through clear dispute and appeal mechanisms.

3 Regulatory Framework and Context

- 3.1 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 applies to Social Housing Providers and are aimed at Social Housing tenants.
- 3.2 Under the Safety and Quality Standard, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) requires registered providers to assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services.
- 3.3 The RSH regard councillors as responsible for overview that providers' businesses are managed effectively and that providers comply with all regulatory requirements.
- 3.4 After April 2023, the RSH introduced a series of 22 mandatory Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) creating a new system for assessing how social housing landlords in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services.
- 3.5 The TSM's associated with this Policy are:
 - TP04 – Satisfaction that the home is well maintained
 - TP05 – Satisfaction that the home is safe

4 Related and Relevant Policies

- 4.1 MDH is governed by the following legislation and government guidance:
 - The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
 - Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
 - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
 - NHS and Community Care Act 1990
 - Disability Discrimination Act 1995
 - Housing Act 1985
- 4.2 The following should be read in conjunction with this policy:
 - MDH Tenancy Agreement
 - MDH Recharges Policy
 - MDH Tenant Alterations and Improvements to Council Property Policy
 - MDH Allocations Policy
 - MDH Decant Policy
 - Devon Home Choice Scheme

5 Who qualifies for assistance?

- 5.1 This Policy applies to MDH tenants and members of their household including lodgers and subtenants (where eligible, in line with the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement).

- 5.2 Prior to undertaking any adaptations, MDH will assess whether the proposed works are reasonable and practicable. This assessment will take into account the nature of the adaptations required, as well as the age and condition of the property. Where it is considered more appropriate for the tenant or a member of their household to relocate to an alternative property, including accommodation provided by another housing provider, MDH will discuss the available options with them. MDH will ensure that its housing stock is utilised in the most effective manner.
- 5.3 Leaseholders, owner occupiers, private and other registered provider tenants are not included within the scope of this Policy. These households may be able to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant.

6 Alternative solutions

- 6.1 Where a decision is made not to authorise adaptations, we will work with the relevant Occupational Therapist and the tenant or other permanent member of the household or their appointed representative to look for alternative solutions in line with the timeline as per the statement of need; these options could be:
- Rehousing
 - Alternative adaptations
 - Tenants may also have the option to request permission to make alterations themselves (secure tenants only).

7 Provision of aids

- 7.1 An aid is defined as a portable piece of equipment that is not permanently fixed within the home. The purpose of aids is to support independence and daily living without requiring major structural changes. Portable aids are not provided by MDH. Portable aids are provided by an Occupational Therapist not by MDH. If a free-standing aid is required the tenant should approach their Occupational Therapist.
- 7.2 Assessment and Identification
- Suitable aids will be identified following an assessment by a qualified Occupational Therapist. This assessment may be carried out by social services, health services, or specialist teams such as learning disability services.
- 7.3 Examples of Aids
- Perching stools
 - Chair raisers
 - Toilet seats and frames
 - Bathing equipment

8 Minor adaptations

- 8.1 We encourage residents to inform us of any changes in their circumstances, including where they may need a minor adaptation to their home. A minor adaptation is a small-scale modification to a home that improves accessibility and supports independent living for residents with disabilities or mobility needs.

Under £250

- 8.2 MDH will provide minor adaptations for works costing less than £250 where the tenant believes these will assist them or a member of their household to live more independently. Requests for such adaptations can be made by contacting the tenant's Neighbourhood Officer or the Repairs Service directly.

£250-£1000

- 8.3 For adaptations costing between £250 and £1,000, the Council will require a referral from a medical professional. Examples of adaptations within this range include ramps and minor internal alterations to kitchens or bathrooms. Examples of minor aids and adaptations up to £1000 include: lever taps, specialist handles, grab rails, handrails, flashing doorbells, lowering light switches, or raising floor-level sockets.

9 Major adaptations

- 9.1 MDH will provide major adaptations to assist eligible tenants (refer to section 5) and household members in living independently. A major adaptation is a larger-scale modification to a home that significantly improves accessibility and supports independent living for residents with disabilities or mobility needs. These repairs usually need to be carried out by our specialist in-house team, or one of our specialist contractors. They are higher value works (over £1,000) and take longer to arrange and deliver within our residents' homes.
- 9.2 Where a tenant or a member of their household has a disability or long-term illness, MDH will consider the provision of equipment or major adaptations to their home to enable them to continue living in the property. In determining the scope of works, MDH will take into account any advice or recommendations provided by relevant health professionals and will agree the proposed adaptations with the tenant and/or household member.
- 9.3 Major adaptations will only be undertaken based on the assessment and recommendation of an Occupational Therapist to ensure they are effective and meet the residents' specific needs.
- 9.4 Examples of major adaptations include: improvements to property access (such as ramps and drop kerbs), widening doorways, installing level-access showers, altering heating or lighting controls, fitting stair lifts, reconfiguring bathrooms or kitchens, and, where necessary, extending the property.

9.5 Requirements for approval of a major adaptation:

- An Occupational Therapist will complete an Assessment of Need, which must include clear recommendations confirming that the proposed works are necessary to support and maintain independent living; and
- An assessment will be carried out with the tenant and relevant household member to determine whether relocating to a more suitable property could address the need for adaptations and provide a better long-term solution to their circumstances.

9.6 Where major adaptations are required and cannot reasonably be completed with the tenant or household member remaining in the property, MDH will only consider a decant as a last resort. Before any decision to decant is made, all other possible solutions must be fully explored and documented.

9.7 If a decant is necessary, it will be managed in accordance with the MDH's Decant Policy, ensuring that tenants are treated fairly, consistently, and with respect throughout the process.

10 Timeframes:

10.1 MDH aims to offer an appointment for minor adaptations within 28 days of receiving the request dependant on complexity.

10.2 MDH aims to complete major adaptations classed as high priority (danger) within 6 months of receipt of an Occupational Therapy statement of need dependant on complexity.

10.3 MDH aims to complete major adaptations classed as medium priority (deterioration) within 12 months of receipt of an Occupational Therapy statement of need dependant on complexity.

10.4 MDH aims to complete major adaptations classed as low priority (difficulty) within 18 months of receipt of an Occupational Therapy statement of need. Low priority requests are subject to available funding.

11 Funding

11.1 MDH is committed to providing an effective adaptations service to support tenants and household members with additional needs. Funding for adaptations will be met by MDH; however, resources are limited and will be managed carefully to ensure compliance with legal obligations and delivery of statutory duties.

11.2 Adaptations will be prioritised based on assessed need, ensuring that those in greatest need receive support first. This approach promotes fairness and ensures that resources are allocated where they will have the most significant impact.

- 11.3 When assessing requests for major adaptations, the long-term future use of the property will be taken into account to ensure that investment represents value for money and supports sustainable housing provision.
- 11.4 The £30,000 limit on adaptations is per household and not per person.
- 11.5 Major adaptations over £20,000 will only be undertaken in exceptional circumstances when no other alternative solutions or suitable properties are available. A value for money assessment will be taken before adaptations above this limit are approved.
- 11.6 All cases that include major adaptations over £20,000 must undergo a comprehensive assessment, exploring all wider and more suitable options before proceeding.
- 11.7 Where no alternative options exist, the proposed major adaptation may be considered.
- 11.8 A full case report must be prepared, including:
- Details of the property and household circumstances.
 - Recommended adaptations.
 - A clear summary of the reasons why adaptations at this level are necessary.
- 11.9 This report must be submitted to the Operations Manager Housing for review and subsequently approved by the Head of Housing and Health before any works commence.

12 Adapted properties

- 12.1 All adaptations completed within a property will be recorded as part of the property details held in MDH's housing management system. This ensures accurate record-keeping and supports effective future planning.
- 12.2 Wherever practical, this information will be used to inform future property allocations, prioritising applicants who require specific adaptations. This approach helps maximise the use of adapted homes and ensures that resources are targeted to meet individual needs.
- 12.3 MDH will implement an annual programme for the servicing and maintenance of installed equipment, including stair lifts, lifting equipment, and other mechanical aids. This programme ensures that all equipment remains safe, functional, and compliant with relevant standards, thereby supporting tenant independence and reducing the risk of breakdowns or hazards.
- 12.4 MDH will meet the cost of all routine repairs and maintenance to any adaptations provided or adopted by them.

- 12.5 If a tenant moves, any adaptations fitted by MDH are to remain at the property. Any adaptations fitted by the tenant are to be removed unless agreed otherwise by MDH.

13 Circumstances Where Adaptation Works Are Generally Not Considered Reasonable or Practicable

13.1 Major adaptations will typically not be approved in the following situations:

- Under- or Over-Occupation: Where the property is not appropriately sized for the household (e.g., too large or too small).
- Additional Space Requirement: Where an extra bedroom or living space is needed and suitable alternative accommodation is available within the local area.
- Level Access Shower: Where installation is requested in properties located on the first floor or above without lift access, or in bathrooms within family-sized homes that are under-occupied.
- Future Letting Constraints: Where adaptations would substantially reduce the Council's ability to re-let the property in the future and suitable alternative accommodation is available.
- Possession Proceedings: Where the Council is actively seeking possession of the property due to a breach of tenancy conditions.

13.2 Adaptations for lodgers or subtenants will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Operations Manager Housing.

13.3 For adaptations requested on behalf of household members who are not named on the tenancy agreement, the following conditions must be met:

- The individual must be registered as residing at the property for Council Tax purposes.
- Any household member aged 18 years or over must also be registered on the Electoral Roll at that address.

13.4 Adaptations for a child with a disability will be carried out at the child's main residence where the parents are separated. This will normally be the residence of the parent who is in receipt of child benefit for that child, where applicable. Authorisation will be determined by Operations Manager Housing after the situation has been reviewed.

14 Ramps, drop kerbs and vehicle hard standings

14.1 External ramps and vehicle hard standings are considered major adaptations. They may be installed following an Occupational Therapist assessment for permanent wheelchair users, where the wheelchair has been prescribed by NHS Wheelchair Services.

14.2 Ramps will be built to meet Building Regulations Part K and M and are not intended for mobility scooter use.

- 14.3 MDH cannot provide dropped kerbs on adopted highways. Tenants will be signposted to Devon County Council's Highways Department for advice. The only exception is where a dropped kerb is required to access a hard standing within the property boundary; in these cases, MDH will assist with enquiries.

15 Appeals

- 15.1 MDH recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where strict adherence to this Policy is not appropriate. Applications for assistance that fall outside the scope of this Policy will be reviewed by the Operations Manager Housing. Where it is considered reasonable and appropriate to do so, the Operations Manager Housing may approve exceptions to the Policy, ensuring that decisions are documented and justified.
- 15.2 Tenants have the right to dispute or appeal decisions if they believe this Policy has not been applied correctly or if they feel that the outcome of an adaptation request should be reconsidered. All appeals will be handled in line with MDDC Complaints and Feedback Policy ensuring transparency, fairness, and timely resolution.

16 Complaints

- 16.1 We try to get things right the first time and when we do, we would love people to let us know. It's great for us to receive positive comments or feedback, so if people wish to complement our staff for doing a great job, we would love to hear from them.
- 16.2 If things do go wrong the MDH is committed to:
- Dealing with complaints and comments quickly and effectively; and
 - Using complaints, comments and compliments to review and improve our services
- 16.3 When tenants contact us to tell us they are dissatisfied with the service we have provided, we will offer them the choice to have an informal conversation to see if we can put things right quickly, without the need for a formal investigation.
- 16.4 The Housing Ombudsman Service advise that a complaint must be defined as:
'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents'.
- 16.5 Where a tenant considers that MDH has given a poor service or has got something wrong, they may tell a member of staff in the first instance. This does not need to be treated as a formal complaint (unless the complainant asks us to do so) and may be resolved 'there and then' by way of an apology or plan of action. Any comments provided will be used to take appropriate action, or give information.
- 16.6 If a tenant does not want to do this or is unhappy with the response, they may make a formal complaint, which can escalate from stage 1 or stage 2 if they are still not satisfied with the response. Having been through stages 1 and 2 and if they are still not satisfied, the tenant may contact the Housing Ombudsman Service.

16.7 MDH's complaints procedure is detailed on Mid Devon District Council website: [Feedback and Complaints](#)

17 Equality Impact Assessments

17.1 MDH completes an equality impact assessment each time we develop or review a policy, procedure or service. The assessment is to help us make sure our decision making is fair and does not present any barriers or disadvantage to customers from any protected group (including disability) under the Equality Act 2010.

18 Summary of Additions and Policy Amendments

The following Policy amendments have been made:

Date	Amendment Made	Amendment Authorised by