



Adaptations Policy

Approved by SMT	27 th October 2022
Approved by Committee/Board	Customer Services Committee
Effective date	27 th October 2022
Review date	31 st October 2025
Policy developed by	Head of Asset Management
Consultations	None
Associated policy	None

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Introduction

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This Policy sets out the criteria by which Connexus Homes Limited will facilitate the provision of disabled adaptations to homes to enable customers to remain in their homes for as long as possible.
- 1.2 We must recognise that our customers and their families live within our properties, and we need to consider them, at all times, when making decisions about adapting the property to ensure that where possible they can remain within their home.
- 1.3 Scope: The policy applies to the whole of the Group. This means Connexus Homes Limited, (ultimate parent) and all its subsidiaries.

2. Problem to solve

- 2.1 To facilitate the provision of an adaptations service, liaising with Local Authorities and other organisations to meet the needs of our customers and make best use of our housing stock.
- 2.2 Adaptations are works to a customer's home which enables them to remain there for as long as possible. It is an addition to or a change to their home, which allows them to live more independently, or a change to allow a customer, or their carer greater safety and mobility and contribute to their quality of life.
- 2.3 Minor adaptations are defined as works of a value up to £1,500. Connexus will consider undertaking work up to this value following a request from a customer, a recommendation from an Occupational Therapist (O.T.), or a letter of support from a GP, Social Worker or Health Visitor. Minor adaptations under £500 may be ordered without a recommendation, however where adaptation work is more complex, a formal O.T. assessment may be required.
- 2.4 Examples of minor adaptations under £500 are:
 - Grab rail
 - Lever taps
 - Half steps
 - Stair rails

Examples of minor adaptations over £500 where OT or other support is required are:

- Minor ramps
 - Door widenings
 - Door threshold changes
- 2.5 Major adaptations are defined as works costing over £1,500. Major adaptation requests must come via a Local Authority Occupational Therapist referral.

2.6 Examples of major adaptations are:

- Level access showers
- Adapted kitchens
- Stair lifts and hoists
- Through floor lifts
- External ramps
- Shower room/bedroom extensions
- Specialist equipment e.g., Closomat toilets

3. Method/s

3.1 Connexus has a commitment not only to the adaptation requirements of our customers, but also to the general provision of affordable accommodation. All possible options will be explored following requests for adaptations, including rehousing. Where rehousing is an option, the impact on the family will be considered.

Connexus will not normally carry out major adaptations to general housing stock or if the customer has refused a local re-housing option. Before agreeing to adapt a general needs property, Connexus's Housing team will discuss the best options with the customer and the OT and agree a solution that suits both the customer and Connexus. The principle is to make best use of Connexus resources in adapting the accommodation so that it can be re-used to provide facilities for future generations.

3.2 Where it is not possible or feasible to carry out an adaptation following an O.T.'s recommendation e.g., a first-floor level access shower to a general needs house, we will work with the customers to find more suitable accommodation. We will not unreasonably refuse permission and will liaise with the customer and the O.T. on every referral. It may be possible to review our void properties and adapt these to suit any local needs if one is suitable or consider adapting new properties through our development process.

Where there are no alternatives and the decision to adapt a general needs property is made, it should be agreed with the OT's and the Local Authority that the property be reverted to general needs once the adaptations are no longer required. For example, a bath re-fitted in lieu of the adapted shower. However, where possible any adaptation work should be retained or re-used, for example the shower may be left as an over the bath shower. Costs for reverting it back to be discussed with the Local Authority on a one-to-one basis.

3.3 We will ensure that our existing customers' needs are accurately reflected by the local authority's choice-based lettings scheme. Where a suitable property is identified within our own stock, a direct let will be considered.

3.4 Adaptations may be provided as part of the Planned Works Programme such as kitchen and bathroom replacements. Early contact is invited from those with adaptation needs to minimise delays to works, however the same rules apply as above. In addition, where it is identified that adaptations are required for an incoming customer then these works may be completed within the voids works

process subject to recommendations being timely received and approved by the relevant local authority.

- 3.5 All major adaptations are funded via Disabled Facilities Grants provided by Herefordshire and Shropshire Councils. On occasions the Local Authority may request an extension to a property to suit a specific adaptation need. Where this is requested, we will meet with the customer and the OT and assess the property to ensure that it is suitable for the required adaptation.
- 3.6 Minor adaptations have an identified budget which is allocated to works through the ordering system available for responsive repairs. However, all major adaptations will be managed through the Assets team who will add any adaptations to the Asset data base.
- 3.7 Connexus will ensure that where possible adaptations are recycled and that adapted properties are advertised appropriately via Homepoint, minimising the need to remove fixed adaptations to accommodate incoming general needs customers.
- 3.8 Connexus will advertise the adaptations process via newsletters, on its website and through an adaptation leaflet which can be left with customers.
- 3.9 The weekly rent of a property will only be increased following adaptation works if the work has resulted in property enhancements in line with Connexus rent setting policy and regulatory guidance. Any rent increase will only apply from the time the property is relet for the first time following the adaptation works.
- 3.10 Where an aid is installed that requires servicing and maintenance, the Compliance team will need to be notified so that they can add this to an annual management contract. A service charge will be introduced where adaptations require a maintenance contract to be taken out to maintain/service equipment installed, however, this will be discussed prior to the adaptation being agreed with the customer to ensure that they can afford them.
- 3.11 We will hold on our Asset and Customer databases, a register of all our properties which have been adapted, with details of those adaptations. This will ensure that they are let in the future to those customers who require an adapted property.

4. Legal and Regulatory Requirements

- 4.1 The current Regulatory Framework's Home Standard requires housing associations to develop and manage good quality homes that seek to meet peoples' needs both now and, in the future, ensuring that:
 - The homes their customers live in are well maintained and in a lettable condition.
 - Maintenance is carried out effectively and responsively and in ways that reflect customers' preferences and needs.
 - Necessary investment in the future of their stock is made a key priority with a view to lifetime homes.
- 4.2 Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970

- 4.3 The Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- 4.4 Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant and Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing and an Ageing Society.
- 4.5 The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, 1988

5. Monitoring and Review

- 5.1 The Adaptation Policy will be reviewed every three years or as and when required to ensure that it meets all legal requirements and reflects best practice involving stakeholders.

6. Links to other Documents

- 6.1 This policy is linked to:
- Planned Maintenance Policy
 - Planned Maintenance Procedure
 - Lettings Policy
 - Direct Let Procedure

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment



Equality Impact Assessment Form

Strategy / policy / procedure / service / function / project being assessed	Adaptation Policy
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Stage 1		
Lead officer	[REDACTED]	
Date of assessment	18 th December 2022	
Date for next review	31 st October 2025	
Reason for assessment	Update policy	
Agreed and signed off by lead officer's line manager	Manager's signature [REDACTED]	Date 20/12/2022

Stage 2		
Aims of the service / function / policy/project under assessment	Ensuring that properties can meet the diverse needs of our customers ensuring that where appropriate customers can remain in their home	
Main stakeholders / beneficiaries	All customers, colleagues and Local Authority that are involved with the adaptation of our properties	
Who is likely to be affected by the service/ function/ policy/project?	Vulnerable customers with a disability or health condition requiring adapted support	
What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the service/function/policy/project?	Regular adaptation meetings are held internally and externally. The external meetings are also held with the Local Authority	



Stage 3				
Collect and evaluate the evidence				
Key questions	Positive impact	Negative impact	No specific impact on any one group	Evidence
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on any racial groups? Describe how and which.			√	<p>The policy gives clear guidelines for colleagues and customers on how we will adapt properties and where the Local Authority undertake adaptations for larger improvements managed through the disabled facilities grant route.</p> <p>Any customer or groups can request an adaptation. Customers can request a small adaptation and site inspections by colleagues will help ensure that the adaptation is correct and meets their needs. Where a major adaptation is requested, this is normally through a disabled Facilities Grant via the Local Authority. We will liaise with the Occupational Therapists and customers to ensure that the adaptation can be installed within the existing home and then ensure that it is built to a high quality.</p>
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on individuals where English is not their first language Describe how and which.		√		Where customers do not have English as their first language, then the policy and information can be translated to their natural language and when undertaking inspection language lines can be used to translate speech immediately to ensure that both we

				and they understand the required adaptation and what is involved.
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on women or men? This includes Transgender people / Trans people. Describe how and which			√	<p>The policy gives clear guidelines for colleagues and customers on how we will adapt properties and where the Local Authority undertake adaptations for larger improvements managed through the disabled facilities grant route.</p> <p>Any customer or groups can request an adaptation. Customers can request a small adaptation and site inspections by colleagues will help ensure that the adaptation is correct and meets their needs. Where a major adaptation is requested, this is normally through a disabled Facilities Grant via the Local Authority. We will liaise with the Occupational Therapists and customers to ensure that the adaptation can be installed within the existing home and then ensure that it is built to a high quality.</p>
Key questions	Positive impact	Negative impact	No specific impact on any one group	Evidence
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on people with disabilities? Describe how and which	√			This policy has a positive impact on all customers, because it allows customers to remain in their homes as their specific needs change throughout their life. Properties can be adapted easily to accommodate any adaptations and then used in the future by other customers with similar requirements.
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on people of a particular age? (e.g. children, young people, older people). Describe how and which	√			There is no negative impact on any person or age of persons because all properties can be adapted. We also have an aging customer base within the areas that we work. This allows customers to remain in their home as they grow older and allows them full use of the property through mechanical adaptations or extensions allowing the use of the ground floor accommodation.

<p>Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on people with particular sexuality / sexual orientation? Describe how and which</p>			<p>√</p>	<p>The policy gives clear guidelines for colleagues and customers on how we will adapt properties and where the Local Authority undertake adaptations for larger improvements managed through the disabled facilities grant route.</p> <p>Any customer or groups can request an adaptation. Customers can request a small adaptation and site inspections by colleagues will help ensure that the adaptation is correct and meets their needs. Where a major adaptation is requested, this is normally through a disabled Facilities Grant via the Local Authority. We will liaise with the Occupational Therapists and customers to ensure that the adaptation can be installed within the existing home and then ensure that it is built to a high quality.</p>
<p>Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on people in terms of marriage/civil partnership status? Describe how and which</p>			<p>√</p>	<p>The policy gives clear guidelines for colleagues and customers on how we will adapt properties and where the Local Authority undertake adaptations for larger improvements managed through the disabled facilities grant route.</p> <p>Any customer or groups can request an adaptation. Customers can request a small adaptation and site inspections by colleagues will help ensure that the adaptation is correct and meets their needs. Where a major adaptation is requested, this is normally through a disabled Facilities Grant via the Local Authority. We will liaise with the Occupational Therapists and customers to ensure that the adaptation can be installed within the existing home and then ensure that it is built to a high quality.</p>
<p>Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on people with a particular religion</p>			<p>√</p>	<p>The policy gives clear guidelines for colleagues and customers on how we will adapt properties and where the Local Authority undertake adaptations for larger</p>

<p>or belief? Describe how and which</p>				<p>improvements managed through the disabled facilities grant route.</p> <p>Any customer or groups can request an adaptation. Customers can request a small adaptation and site inspections by colleagues will help ensure that the adaptation is correct and meets their needs. Where a major adaptation is requested, this is normally through a disabled Facilities Grant via the Local Authority. We will liaise with the Occupational Therapists and customers to ensure that the adaptation can be installed within the existing home and then ensure that it is built to a high quality.</p>
<p>Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on people in terms of pregnancy/maternity? Describe how and which</p>			<p>√</p>	<p>The policy gives clear guidelines for colleagues and customers on how we will adapt properties and where the Local Authority undertake adaptations for larger improvements managed through the disabled facilities grant route.</p> <p>Any customer or groups can request an adaptation. Customers can request a small adaptation and site inspections by colleagues will help ensure that the adaptation is correct and meets their needs. Where a major adaptation is requested, this is normally through a disabled Facilities Grant via the Local Authority. We will liaise with the Occupational Therapists and customers to ensure that the adaptation can be installed within the existing home and then ensure that it is built to a high quality.</p>
<p>Is it possible that the service/function/policy could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage those that do not have access to digital equipment?</p>		<p>√</p>		<p>This policy may have a negative impact where the customer does not have access to a computer, broadband or the internet to read policies and complete any forms especially those where a DFG request is made through the LA. To help overcome this</p>

				a more personal approach can be made to customers to help them understand and apply for any grant.
Is it possible that the service/function/policy could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage or cause an individual/community financial hardship?	√			Smaller adaptations upto a value of £1,500 can be requested at no additional cost by customers. Where a customer then requests a DFG, this is agreed and paid by the LA through their disabled grants. Where required we will also commit capital spend to help increase costs for larger adaptations such as extensions to properties.

Outsourced services	
If delivery of your strategy, policy, project or service is partly or wholly provided by external organisations / agencies, please list any arrangements you plan, to ensure that they promote equality and diversity.	Adapting properties is also the responsibility of the Local Authority especially any works over £1,500 which is the limit of Connexus Homes budget within this policy. The Local Authority team promote adapting properties through their disabled facilities grant and they have their own policies on adapting properties. We work with the LA teams to ensure that the adaptation requested is correct and that the property can receive the work.
Relations between different equality groups	
Does your assessment show that a policy, project or service may have a differential impact between any discrete groups? If yes, please explain how this issue is going to be tackled	There maybe a negative impact where English is not a customers first language or where there is a lack of IT or internet. This can be overcome by altering any written policies or information into a language understood by the customer and where there is no internet visiting customers in their home to help them read and understand policies or forms to be completed. Where properties cannot be adapted, we will help find a more suitable property to either adapt or establish if there is any adapted property can be let to those with a disability. We try and retain adapted properties for future need.

Stage 4 – Summary of replies from individuals and stakeholders consulted, including any previous complaints on equality and diversity issues about the policy or service

This policy was reviewed by both colleagues and customers, any comments and changes were accommodated. For example, the adaptation process was discussed with a customer scrutiny group and they reviewed our approach and changed the policy, for example looking at void properties that maybe more suitable to adapt.

Stage 5 – Options resulting from this equality impact assessment, including measures necessary to minimise or remove any adverse impact and better promotion of equality and diversity. Consider any alternative solutions

There may be a negative impact where English is not a customer's first language or where there is a lack of IT or internet. This can be overcome by altering any written policies or information into a language understood by the customer and where there is no internet visiting customers in their home to help them read and understand policies or forms to be completed. Where properties cannot be adapted, we will help find a more suitable property to either adapt or establish if there is any adapted property can be let to those with a disability. We try and retain adapted properties for future needs.

Stage 6 – Arrangements for regular monitoring of the impact of the policy, project or service

Regular meetings internally and externally with the Local Authority. Comments received from customers when adapting properties would be used to change our approach where necessary. The customer scrutiny group will also continue to review the policy ensuring that it remains appropriate and current to meet those customers with a disability.

Stage 7 – Any actions & outcomes, including how these are to be communicated both internally & externally as required

Joint inspections and meetings will continue between the Asset team and the Housing team when adaptations are requested especially around those larger DFG type adaptations. Joint meetings between the Assets team and the LA will also continue where a DFG is requested. Individual requests will be discussed and where necessary capital receipts from Connexus may also be used to ensure that the adaptation goes ahead.

Discussions on retaining adapted properties and holding a register of adapted properties will be kept ensuring that we and the LA make the best use of adapted properties and that these are let to those in need.