Portsmouth Homes

Portsmouth CITY COUNCIL

Aids and Adaptations Policy

Summary

The policy outlines our approach to the management of requests for aids and adaptations recommended by an Occupational Therapist (OT) for residents or members of their household to restore or enable independent living for tenants and their families who may reside within a disabling environment.

Effective date

1 October 2024

Review

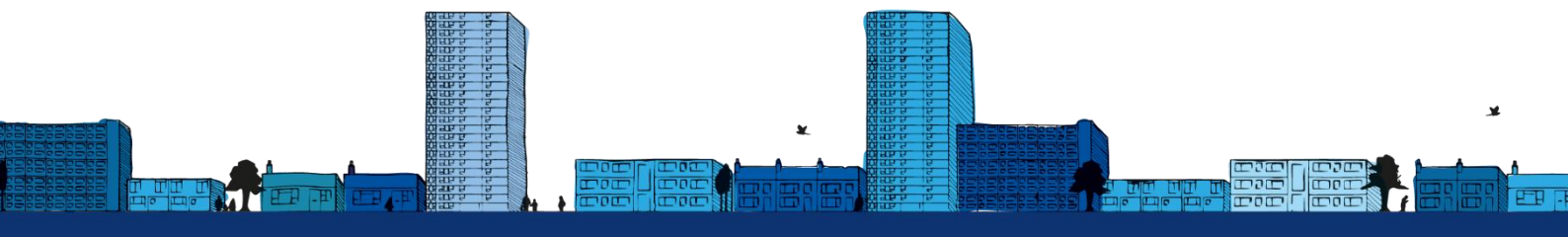
Latest Review Date: 16 December 2026

We will review this Policy every 3 years or when there has been an update to legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational changes.

Version

Version 1.4

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Who the policy applies to

This policy covers:

- All council Housing Revenue Account (HRA) dwellings including communal areas, sheltered schemes and houses in multiple occupancy.
- Portsmouth Homes tenants and members of their household

Any reference in this policy to ‘we’, ‘our’ or ‘us’ refers to Portsmouth Homes.

Any reference in this policy to 'tenant', 'customer' or 'resident' refers to a Portsmouth Homes secure tenant or members of their household.

Why we have this policy

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Outline our approach to the management of requests for aids and adaptations recommended by an Occupational Therapist (OT) for residents or members of their household to restore or enable independent living for tenants and their families who may reside within a disabling environment.
- Ensuring we meet our statutory and legislative obligations.

Purpose of Aids and Adaptations

The purpose of providing aids or adapting Portsmouth Homes housing stock is to restore or enable independent living for tenants and their families who may reside within a disabling environment. A ‘one-size fits all approach’ is not adopted in delivering adaptations and where proportionate works are tailored to meet individual needs and requirements.

Most tenants will want Portsmouth Homes to organise aids and adaptation works and take ownership. The relevant building repairs manager will organise the works using the appropriate building repairs resources, keeping the resident updated of timescales to complete the work as appropriate.

Portsmouth Homes will retain ownership of any aids, adaptations and specialist equipment installed by Portsmouth Homes and will be responsible for their inspection, servicing, maintenance, repair and replacement where required.

Minor Aids and Adaptations criteria

A request for aids and adaptations can be made to the Occupational Therapists (OT) or directly to the Customer Repairs team or area housing office.

If the estimated cost of works is £1,000, or less, it is considered a minor adaptation (DP15). Some typical examples of works that would fit within the scope of a minor adaptation are:

- Grab rail

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- Ramp
- Widening doors for wheelchair access

Where a minor adaptation is necessary and practical to install, Portsmouth Homes will provide it free of charge. A repair will then be raised under the appropriate priority category and arrangements made for the work to be completed.

Major Adaptations criteria

If the estimated cost of works is more than £1,000, it is considered a major adaptation.

All requests for major adaptation works must be assessed by an Occupational Therapist (OT) who will provide recommendations and specifications as necessary, including highlighting any high-priority cases. During this assessment the OT may request assistance from a Building Surveyor and Housing Officer to assess the suitability of the property for adaptation.

A request for major aids and adaptations can only be made by Occupational Therapists (OT), a request is not a guarantee that work will be undertaken, Portsmouth Homes will decide if any adaptations should proceed or not.

Where a recommendation from an Occupational Therapist is proposed not to proceed, the case will be referred to the Aids and Adaptations Panel for consideration. The referral will include the reasons the recommendation is proposed to be refused, the evidence considered, any alternative solutions explored, and any interim measures identified to meet the resident's needs. The Aids and Adaptations Panel will review the information and make the final decision on whether the adaptation should proceed.

Occupational Therapist services are delivered by the local authority to the Portsmouth Homes housing areas as outlined below.

Portsmouth City Council:

- Buckland
- Landport
- Paulsgrove
- Portsea
- Somerstown

Hampshire County Council

- Leigh Park
- Fareham
- Gosport
- Wecock Farm
- Winchester

Some typical examples of works that would fit within the scope of a major adaptation are:

- Overbath shower

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- Bathroom conversion to a wet room
- Extension for bedroom and/or bathroom
- Major internal reorganisation of accommodation
- Stair-lift
- Vertical through floor lift

Portsmouth Homes will make fair, realistic, financially sound and documented decisions regarding adaptations to properties using PLAN (Proportionate, Lawful, Accountable and Necessary) that it has been informed about to decide if any adaptations should proceed or not.

Options to address the need include:

- Wait for existing suitable alternative accommodation to become available
- Wait for alternative accommodation that can be more practically adapted
- Adapt resident's current dwelling/communal area

Requests will be acknowledged promptly. Whilst requests will generally be progressed in date order, they will also be assessed and prioritised based on the resident's functional needs, any identified health and safety risks, and their individual circumstances.

When determining priority, we will consider a range of factors including any immediate risk to health or safety, the resident's ability to access essential facilities within the home, hospital discharge requirements, the risk of admission to hospital or residential care, safeguarding concerns, the impact on carers or dependent household members, and whether suitable interim equipment or temporary measures are available.

We will keep residents informed of the next steps, indicative timescales and the officer responsible for progressing their request. Where a timescale cannot be met, we will explain the reason, provide an updated timescale and consider whether any interim measures are appropriate.

Financial eligibility

Portsmouth Homes funds aids and adaptations through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Major adaptations may be subject to a financial assessment (means test) to determine whether the works will be fully funded by Portsmouth Homes or whether a tenant contribution is appropriate. Where a contribution is required, the area housing office will discuss this with the tenant and agree a suitable payment arrangement.

A financial assessment will not normally be required where the adaptation is for a disabled child, relates to a communal area, or where the tenant is in receipt of Housing Benefit.

Your responsibility

- You must initiate requests through the appropriate channels (e.g., OT referral, housing office) and provide necessary information for assessment.

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- You should allow staff and contractors access to carry out adaptations and related inspections.
- For major adaptations, you may be required to contribute following a financial assessment in accordance with this policy.
- You may be responsible for minor upkeep (e.g., cleaning or basic care of installed aids) and reporting faults promptly.
- You should notify us if adaptations are no longer required or if circumstances change.
- You must report any faults or defects promptly for aids and adaptations or specialist equipment installed and provide access for inspection, servicing and repair.

As a resident, you can organise the works yourself and maintain ownership on completion. Where you wish to organise the works the Improvements and Alterations policy will apply.

Aids and Adaptations Panel

Panel referrals and decisions

The panel will be chaired by an Assistant Director and include appropriate Heads of Service from Buildings and Housing together with appropriate representation from the Occupational Therapy service and Housing Need and Supply service. The panel will meet monthly.

The Panel will be informed when any potential adapted properties:

- Adaptations are likely to exceed £50,000.
- Adaptations include a proposed extension to a property.
- The housing register does not meet the needs of occupants requiring adaptations.
- Complex or high-priority cases, where support or advice or additional resources or better use of the stock is identified where collective agreement is needed.
- Recommendations from Occupational Therapists (OTs) for major aids and adaptations that the Buildings team proposes to refuse

The panel has a mandate to make fair, realistic, financially sound and documented decisions regarding adaptations to properties in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) that it has been informed about to decide if any adaptations are essential and should proceed or not.

The panel will exercise judgement when considering adaptations including factors such as resident circumstances and vulnerability, safety, appropriateness, effectiveness, proportionality, cost, value for money, impact on the property or neighbourhood, future use and long-term management of the property when determining whether a proposed adaptation represents a reasonable and justified solution.

The Panel will consider the nature of the resident's functional needs, including their variability, and the likelihood of change over time, when assessing whether a major permanent structural solution is appropriate.

If works exceeding £50,000 and extensions are agreed to proceed the panel will sign off the funding, design, drawings and specification before works proceed.

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The panel will hear any dispute regarding a decision to adapt a property or not, make decisions regarding any operational disagreement between Occupational Therapists, Housing Management and Building Surveyors or other interested parties regarding adaptation of a property.

Where a resident disagrees with a Panel decision, they may use the Portsmouth Homes landlord complaints process or provide additional information for further consideration.

Panel Oversight

The panel will have oversight of the process, changes to the legislation and effectiveness managing requests for aids and adaptations.

The panel will review the following key areas and implement changes required to processes, policies or communication to residents as appropriate:

- Our response and resources for requests for aids and adaptations including service measures for demand, capacity, end to end process time, quality, costs and customer satisfaction.
- Training provided to staff and information provided to residents.
- Record all aids and adaptations complaints to review any learning.
- Review any other feedback escalated from the regular monthly operational meetings.
- Changes to legislation, best practice, guidance or recommendations from reviews.

Your voice

We provide tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to engage, influence and scrutinise the Landlord Strategies, policies and services, to include Resident Consortium together with repairs and maintenance focus groups.

If you would like to be included in future resident engagement focus groups and would like to know how to get involved, please contact us for more information:

You can contact our team by:

- Email: **housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**
- Phone: 02392 834835
- Website**:** visit the **Resident engagement and community resources on our website**

What have we done to make sure this Policy is fair?

We completed an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to consider the positive and negative impacts this Policy may have on people with protected characteristics under the **Equality Act 2010**. This Policy should have direct and positive equality and diversity impacts.

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Regulation and legislation

We recognise the variety of legislation, and we will continue to monitor relevant legal guidance. The list below reflects some of the existing legal framework and relevant publications:

- **Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996**
- **Housing Act 2004**
- **Care Act 2014**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970**
- **The Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008**

Related documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- **Portsmouth Homes policies, strategies and reports - Portsmouth City Council**Tenancy Agreement / Leasehold Agreement
- **Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) delivery: guidance for local authorities in England**

How to feedback

If you have any questions around the policy or would like to know more about its application, please contact the relevant service in the first instance.

You can get this policy in large print, braille, audio or in another language by contacting your Housing Office. More information is available **translation, interpreting and audio information**.

Compliments

To help us provide the best service we can. We would like to hear customer views on the services that they use. If the customer is pleased with a member of staff or service, please let us know.

- Telephone: 02392 606383
- Email address: **HNBLandlordComplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**

Complaints

If a customer is unhappy, they can refer to our Landlord Complaints Policy.

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- Online complaint form at **Make a housing complaint**
- Telephone: 02392 606383
- Email address: **HNBLandlordComplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**

Housing Ombudsman Service

If a customer is unhappy, they can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service for advice and guidance at any time.

- Online complaint form on **the Housing Ombudsman Service website**
- Telephone: 0300 111 3000
- For more information, visit **Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code**

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