



Aides and Adaptations Policy (Council owned properties) - Housing

Newark & Sherwood District Council
Policy Document
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC) Housing, Health and Wellbeing Directorate undertakes the main housing management functions, including letting homes, repairs & maintenance, rent collection and estate management of in excess of 5500 Council owned domestic properties in the Newark and Sherwood District.
- 1.2 This policy is one of many implemented in line with the NSDC's purpose of "Serving People, Improving Lives" and is further supported by NSDC's values which underpin the work we do:
- Ambitious and forward thinking.
 - Caring and Compassionate.
 - Commercial and Business-like.
 - Professional and Trustworthy.
 - Welcoming and Responsive.
- 1.3 The promises captured in this policy are supplemented by NSDC's Housing Service strategies, policies, and local standards. All of which can be accessed by contacting the Customer Access Service on 0800 561 0010 and via our website www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk.

2. Terms and definitions used within this policy

2.1 Introductory tenancy

An introductory tenancy under Chapter I of Part V of the Housing Act 1996, is similar to a 'trial' period for new tenants. The introductory tenancy allows a period of time for NSDC to decide if you are a suitable tenant. You automatically become a secure tenant after 12 months, unless NSDC has extended your introductory tenancy for a further 6 months.

2.2 Secure tenancy

A secure tenancy under Part 4 of the Housing Act 1985, means you can normally live in the property for the rest of your life, as long as you do not break the conditions of your tenancy. A secure tenancy typically can only be ended by the landlord obtaining a court order.

2.3 Demoted tenancy

A demoted tenancy is a secure tenancy, which has been terminated and replaced by order of the court. Demoted tenants have reduced rights similar to those of an introductory tenancy. In cases of anti-social behaviour, we may apply to the County Court to have a secure tenancy reduced to a demoted tenancy.

3. Policy statement

- 3.1 NSDC recognises that in some instances tenants are living in accommodation that is no longer suitable for their needs.
- 3.2 NSDC is committed to providing assistance and delivering solutions to meet the needs of tenants that are long term sick or disabled to enable them, where possible, to enjoy a good quality of life and sustain independent living in their home.

3.3 NSDC will make effective and efficient use of its extensively adapted housing stock when resolving adaptation cases, particularly those of a complex nature.

4. Policy objectives

4.1 NSDC will:

- Work with and provide advice to tenants to enable them to sustain their tenancy and live independently.
- Offer effective support to tenants requiring adaptations.
- Consider each major adaptations request on an individual basis.
- Give all applicants an equal opportunity to access the aids and adaptations service whatever their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.
- Adopt a partnership approach to seeking an effective adaptation solution and achieving all the objectives listed, this may involve liaising with other landlords regarding alternate suitable accommodation.
- Assist in providing solutions to adaptation requests that remove barriers which may affect a person's quality of life.
- Ensure that value for money is a key consideration in delivering new adaptations and retaining existing adaptations.
- Liaise with and take advice from professional advisors e.g. Occupational Therapists (OT).

4.2 NSDC's Aids and Adaptations policy intends equal treatment across different types of tenures.

4.3 NSDC's Aids and Adaptations policy intends to adopt the same statutory tests ('necessary and appropriate' and 'reasonable and practicable') as used in the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) policy.

5. Scope of the policy

5.1 The policy covers the work of NSDC employees.

5.2 NSDC is responsible for:

- Proactively delivering solutions to support its tenants that have either physical or sensory disabilities in partnership with the Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) Social Services Occupational Therapy Team.
- Referring requests to agencies that can provide appropriate support or care services, where applicable.
- Effectively managing and monitoring service requests.
- Where necessary, providing alternative suitable housing or refer tenants to other local landlords better able to meet their needs.
- Working with tenants to design and seek to deliver cost effective adaptation solutions to meet their needs.

- Working with tenants and partners to develop and deliver the adaptations service in line with best practice.
- During the delivery of major refurbishment works, offer options to support tenants with disabilities and provide value for money adaptation solutions.
- Where appropriate, consulting with tenants to ensure that communal spaces and common parts associated with their property are accessible in line with the recommendations of the Equalities Act 2010.

6. Partnership working

- 6.1 NSDC recognise that its success in both delivering this policy and delivering effective adaptation solutions is dependent upon its ability to create positive working relationships with key partners.
- 6.2 NSDC takes a proactive approach to partnership working and arranges relevant and appropriate contact and communication with the relevant teams from NCC Social Services. This aims to provide NSDC with an indication of future workload and timescales that NCC is working to. Additionally, it provides NCC with an indication of the Council's current performance.
- 6.3 NSDC also work in partnership with Local Primary Care Trusts (PCT's). The PCT's advise the adaptations team when patients that are tenants or residents of the NSDC are being discharged from hospital and require relevant support. In these instances, NSDC will, where possible, arrange for relevant adjustments to be made to the tenant's home in preparation for their arrival.
- 6.4 NSDC have a positive relationship with other Social Landlords within the District which assist with some cases in delivering effective solutions to the adaptation needs of our tenants. We will, in complex needs cases, look to these other Social Landlords to provide alternative adapted accommodation to our tenants where our more limited stock levels means that we cannot appropriately assist.
- 6.5 The exchange of information with key partners ensures that tenants will receive consistent advice with regards to likely timescales.

7. Application

- 7.1 Definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010

'The Equality Act 2010 states that a person is regarded as being disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

A long-term effect refers to disabilities:

- That have lasted for at least 12 months.
- The effects of which last for at least 12 months.
- Which are likely to last for the remainder of a person's life.

A person may be eligible for help under this policy even if they are not registered as disabled, upon recommendation of an OT.

7.2 Who qualifies?

1. NSDC will normally only consider a request for aids and adaptations if the disabled person is the tenant, or their partner, or a member of the immediate family, who is permanently resident in the household.
2. Work for others, such as lodgers, will only be carried out in exceptional circumstances and then only if they they can be deemed to have tenancy rights and have, for example, been resident with the tenant for three or more years.
3. Applicants requiring specialist and/or adapted properties can also apply for vacant adapted properties in line with Section 9 of this policy.
4. Requests for major adaptations will not normally be approved where a Right to Buy ('RTB') application has been received and processed. In these circumstances the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) route will deemed more suitable.
5. Where applicants are on the housing register then each request will be considered on its individual merits and in accordance with the Housing Allocation scheme. The Council will look at options in its housing stock that may be more appropriate in order to offer value for money and contribute towards the effective and efficient management of its housing stock and its pool of adapted properties.
6. Homeowners/leaseholders are not included within this Policy as they are eligible to apply for a [Disabled Facilities Grant](#) (DFG) they require financial assistance. Our tenants will not be required to apply for a DFG for adaptation works to NSDC owned properties, nor will they be means tested or expected to contribute to the cost of the work involved at this time. NSDC may periodically review its decision to not means test or seek a financial contribution for certain adaptations in the future. If a tenant is refused aids and adaptations they can still apply for a DFG.
7. In cases where a child is disabled and the parents are separated; adaptation works will usually only be completed at the property of principle residence (normally the residence of the parent who is in receipt of child benefit for that child).
8. Where tenants are an introductory tenant then NSDC would normally only consider undertaking minor adaptations as defined in this policy or essential safety related major adaptations. However, this does not mean that NSDC will not undertake adaptations but will follow national guidelines when evaluating applications.

9. Applicants who are registered for a transfer or mutual exchange will be considered on their individual merit on a case by case basis. This will include taking into account whether the applicant is requesting to move into a property which is not suitable or less suitable for their needs.
10. NSDC reserve the right to decline requests for adaptations where the cost of the work is considered too high, or not reasonable or practical in terms of building, architectural and construction issues, and the tenant can apply to move to a more suitable property. This also applies to requests for extensions or other changes to the tenant's home due to the household's welfare, social or medical needs and circumstances such as overcrowding.
11. Where tenants are in arrears, a decision will be made on a case-by-case basis as to whether to proceed with adaptation requests taking into account their individual circumstances, and the risk posed to their health and safety by not completing the work requested. In such circumstances interim minor adaptations may be agreed in conjunction with the OT until such time as major adaptations can proceed.
12. Some new build dwellings which are government grant funded and classified as 'General Needs' may have restrictions placed upon them which may prevent approval of major adaptations. NSDC may choose to not adapt such newly built properties until expiry of the contract defects period (usually 12 months after completion).

7.3 What if the tenant wants to install their own aids or carry out an adaptation themselves?

1. A tenant wishing to undertake any adaptation is required to make a written request to NSDC stating what adaptation they wish to carry out.
2. Any adaptation to the property will need to be approved by NSDC before the work is carried out. .
3. If, following approval, a tenant installs their own aids or adaptations these will not normally be maintained by NSDC. The tenant will be advised of their responsibilities for any servicing or repairs that are required.
4. At the end of the tenancy the tenant may be required to remove any approved aid or adaptation they have fitted and make good any damage to the property. Alternatively, if NSDC agrees to take responsibility for the alterations, the tenant will be required to sign over ownership at no cost to NSDC. Where the NSDC agree to take on future responsibility of an adaptation then this would be included in the conditions of any permission that is granted to the tenant to undertake an adaptation.

5. NSDC will not normally grant permission for a tenant to self-fund any optional extras to adaptation products. This is to ensure that any building warranties are not breached, clarity and certainty of ownership (and who is responsible for adaptations), and future maintenance of the adaptation.

7.4 Freestanding aids

Provided tenants meet the criteria contained in the Care Act 2014¹, NCC will provide a range of freestanding aids suitable for the functional requirements of the customer. Freestanding aids may include, for example:

- Mobile hoists.
- Toilet frames.
- Bed levers.
- Shower chairs.
- Bath boards and bath lifts.
- Portable ramps.

Relevant checks will be made on all adaptation requests to ensure that, where equipment is available, it is sourced through this route.

7.5 Can the adaptation be removed?

1. Where adaptations have been carried out to a property designated for elderly people or disabled people these will not normally be reversed e.g. where a bath has been replaced with a level access shower.
2. Where general needs accommodation has been adapted and becomes vacant, NSDC will seek to find a suitable applicant using the NSDC's approved lettings policy. NSDC reserve the right to remove the adaptation if they consider it to be unsuitable for the family moving in.

7.6 What if the tenant wants a transfer after the adaptations have been carried out?

1. Following a major adaptation, we would normally expect the tenant to remain in the property for a minimum of three years.
2. There may, however, be exceptions where the individual's needs have changed, and the OT and NSDC agree a move is necessary. Then, if the new home requires any adaptations to meet their specific needs, we will assess and adapt the property in accordance with the terms of this policy.

7.7 Who will carry out the work?

1. Only NSDC or our approved contractors will carry out adaptations to NSDC properties. This will be closely monitored by a suitably qualified member of

¹ [Care Act 2014](#)

staff to ensure the work meets the required standard and that the tenant's needs are taken into account.

2. For reasons of future maintenance, only NSDC approved materials and products will be used. The tenant will not be permitted to supply their own products for the NSDC contractor to install.

7.8 Access improvements to 'Common Parts and Spaces'

1. NSDC have a number of common spaces/areas that serve flats and maisonettes and other dwellings. As a landlord we have a duty under the Equalities Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people where a request has been made.
2. The duty is not an anticipatory one and does not extend to removing or altering a 'physical feature' such as a staircase or a door. However, NSDC will consider request for reasonable alterations to common parts which would assist disabled persons.
3. NSDC will identify access improvements to common parts and areas as part of regular access audits and reasonable concerns are raised by residents. Where reasonable, these will be included as part of planned refurbishment or improvement schemes.
4. NSDC will not install nor grant permission for stair lifts to be fitted in communal staircases as part of this policy.

7.9 Can I purchase my property once it has been adapted?

1. The presence of adaptations can affect the right to buy a NSDC property. All RTB applications will be assessed by NSDC against the 1985 Housing Act Schedule 5, which states the following circumstances where the RTB may be refused:
2. The right to buy does not arise if the dwelling-house has features which are substantially different from those of ordinary dwelling-houses and are designed to make it suitable for occupation by physically disabled persons, and:
 - it is one of a group of dwelling-houses which it is the practice of the landlord to let for occupation by physically disabled persons, and;
 - a social service or special facilities are provided in close proximity to the group of dwelling-houses wholly or partly for the purpose of assisting those persons.

8. Empty properties (property turnover)

- 8.1 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-let.
- 8.2 NSDC will identify details of any major adaptations for all properties that become vacant.
- 8.3 NSDC will allocate the properties to make the most appropriate use of any existing adaptation.
- 8.4 On occasion, NSDC may subsidise the cost of moving a tenant(s) to a more suitable already adapted (or easier to adapt) property, as follows:
 - Assistance with decoration costs or some additional decoration to the property while it is vacant and payment to cover removal costs. The extent of this assistance will be agreed with the tenant on a case-by-case basis.
 - Where a new tenant, who is not disabled, accepts an offer to move into an adapted property, adaptations such as level access showers and stair lifts will not usually be removed.

9. Aids and adaptations

9.1 General

1. NSDC will only carry out adaptations that are reasonable and practicable for the property and that meet current legislation and best practice guidance.
2. Where the reasonable and practicable test is used, it will only be applied per adaptation. The reasonable and practicable test will not be used to assess general suitability or broader housing suitability (e.g. under-occupation).
3. Testing whether something is 'necessary or appropriate,' will only be applied to specific need, and will not be applied holistically (e.g. overall property suitability).
4. NSDC considers that approved "minor" and "major" adaptations are reasonable and practicable to install in most of its accommodation, providing they can be carried out safely without having an adverse effect on the fabric of the property and, where necessary, have been recommended by an OT.
5. Every application by a tenant for disabled adaptations will be decided as an individual case on its own merits and these policy guidelines will not prevent NSDC from using its own discretion with regards to an individual case.
6. Where appropriate NSDC may seek additional advice to inform the decision-making process on the suitability of an adaptation, if considered necessary, for example, an Occupational Therapist or legal advice.

9.2 Access to assistance

NSDC's Customer Access Service on 0800 561 0010 and via our website will be the primary point of contact for aids and adaptations requests or queries. Such enquiries will either be dealt with directly or signposted to the most appropriate service e.g. NCC Occupational Therapy Team.

9.3 Minor adaptations

1. Minor adaptations are generally defined as simple works costing under £350 in value.
2. Minor adaptations can be referred by several sources including the OT team, via NSDC staff, other departments of Social Services, through the Police/Fire Service, the NHS, or the Falls Team.
3. Examples of common types of minor adaptations include:
 - Grab rails.
 - Lever taps.
 - Additional stair rail.
 - Shower seats.
 - Raised height toilets.
 - Removal of raised internal door thresholds.
 - Adapted smoke alarms for the hearing impaired.
 - Lighting improvements for the visually impaired.
 - Half steps at entrance doors.
 - Key safes.
4. Some minor adaptations can be 'fast tracked' as they are normally undertaken without the need for a referral from an OT. For example, basic half steps, lever taps, stair rails, key safes, and grab rails outside entrance doors. This allows the adaptation to be approved quickly by NSDC which reduces the time taken to complete the work. Tenants can request these works by contacting NSDC's Customer Access Service on 0800 561 0010 and via our website.

9.4 Major Adaptations

1. Major adaptations are generally defined as works costing £350 or over in value.
2. NSDC will usually only carry out major adaptations (defined below) following a recommendation from NCC Adult Social Care and Health or Children's Occupational Therapist Team. This request should demonstrate an occupational therapy assessment of functional need, meeting the required Government's 'Fair Access to Care Services' criteria. It also demonstrates that an expert assessment has been undertaken that takes into account the specific physical and medical needs of the tenant.

3. Major adaptation referrals from an OT are normally in the form of a 'Major Adaptation Care Plan Referral.' This allows the adaptation to be approved by NSDC which reduces the time taken to deliver the adaptation.
4. Examples of common types of major adaptations include, but are not limited to:
 - Level access showers.
 - Over-bath showers.
 - Ramps.
 - Easy going stepped access.
 - External handrails beside steep paths.
 - Widening doors.
 - Stair lifts.
 - Ceiling track hoists.
 - Partial or fully adapted kitchens.
 - Wash / dry toilets.
5. Major adaptations will be carried out within the Council's agreed performance target timescales.

- 9.5 Prior to any works being undertaken, NSDC will synchronise other major works being delivered with any current adaptation requests. In these circumstances it may be possible to deliver all works at the same time to avoid the potential of costly replacement of newly installed components and limit tenant disruption. In these cases, the major works budget shall fund the adaptation. NSDC will liaise with the tenant and the OT to ensure a mutually convenient timescale for achieving completion of the work.
- 9.6 Where necessary, NSDC will liaise with the OT in advance of any prospective adaptation request so as to advise upon feasibility of the work and to discuss alternative solutions available that will equally meet the needs of the tenant.
- 9.7 Generally, it will not be considered reasonable and practicable to carry out major adaptations to a family home where the adaptations would have to be removed from the property when re-let. It is important from a value for money perspective for NSDC to, wherever possible, offer a suitable alternative accommodation to the tenant.
- 9.8 Requests for shower adaptations above ground floor, when not requested in conjunction with a stair lift, will only be considered following a full review of both the tenancy and sustainability of the property. Where an upper storey shower adaptation is agreed then this will comprise a low-profile shower tray as opposed to a true level access solution.

- 9.9 Ramps will generally only be provided by NSDC for one entrance point to a property (front or rear) where a tenant is a full time and permanent wheelchair user, unless otherwise specified by an OT.
- 9.10 OT requests for 'Safe Access to a Garden' will be fulfilled by providing immediate access to a safe area (typically 6m² maximum) in the garden in close proximity to the dwelling to allow appreciation of the outdoor area by the disabled person and provide a safe space to sit and access to hang out washing.

NSDC will not landscape gardens to make them more suitable nor will we provide access to all/ furthest parts of the garden or any existing out-building, shed or greenhouse

- 9.11 Drop kerbs and driveways will only be considered for tenants who are blue badge holders and meet with the NCC OT assessment criteria for this type of adaptation.

Requests for drop kerbs will be refused if they do not confirm with VIA East Midlands Ltd Guidance for drop kerbs. Instances such as steeply sloping ground levels, lack of sufficient space, proximity of street furniture, underground service equipment and bus stops can all be reasons for refusing this type of adaptation.

Restrictions placed by the highway design may also prevent such adaptations being approved. NSDC will consult VIA when determining complex/contentious requests and will use best practice design guidance such as BS8300 to determine if accessible parking exists within the recommended distance of 50 metres of the dwelling entrance so as to align with the distance stipulated for the public environment.

- 9.11 NSDC will not generally carry out any adaptation works that specifically relate to privately purchased mobility scooters. This policy is in line with the criteria used by NCC OT Teams. NSDC will not however unreasonably withhold permission for a resident seeking approval to carry out their own adaptation works to accommodate a mobility scooter, such as ramps or storage sheds, provided that there is appropriate space to site such a request and that the facility does not adversely impact upon the environment or delivery of other services provided.

10. Refusal of requests and alternative solutions

- 10.1 As previously mentioned, not all major adaptation requests received will be deemed to be reasonable or practicable in terms of actually undertaking the adaptation building works .
- 10.2 If the decision is made that it is not reasonable and practicable to carry out a recommended adaptation, NSDC will endeavour to offer suitable alternative accommodation that meets a customer's needs as soon as reasonably possible. The resident may also be signposted to other social landlords who could provide alternative suitable accommodation.

- 10.3 Examples of cases – which will be decided on a case by case basis - where it will generally be deemed as not reasonable or practicable for major adaptation works to be undertaken include:
1. Where the adaptation requested is not structurally practicable.
 2. Where parking bay and access ramp adaptation cannot be accommodated due to the highway's configuration or boundary issues.
 3. To provide access ramps or major adaptations for tenants with a terminal condition, when minor, temporary but safe, and effective solutions can legitimately be undertaken quickly and will sufficiently address the needs of the tenant.
 4. Where the tenant is actively seeking re-housing.
 5. Where NSDC is seeking possession of a property because of continual and serious breach of tenancy conditions and adaptation of the property will not assist in its resolution.
 6. Where provision is requested for use of a motorised scooter
 7. Where the address at which the adaptations are requested are not the individuals' primary place of residence.
 8. Where a request is made to provide a level access shower above ground floor level.
 9. Applications for property extensions will be considered on a case by case basis and, where possible, suitable alternative accommodation will be provided. If, after 9 months, it has not been possible to relocate the tenant, a review of the case will take place by the Business Manager for Housing Maintenance and Asset Management, or equivalent.
- 10.4 Reasonable and practicable will be applied per adaptation. The reasonable and practicable test will not be used to assess general suitability or broader housing suitability (e.g. under-occupation).
- 10.5 Testing whether something is 'necessary or appropriate,' will be applied to specific need, and not applied holistically (e.g. overall property suitability).
- 10.6 Aids and adaptations will not be refused solely because the tenant should move.
- 10.7 Discretion will be exercised by the Director of Housing, Health & Wellbeing and, as necessary, the NSDC Senior Leadership Team (SLT), based on individual circumstances, in relation to the factors listed at 10.3 above. Where it is not reasonable and practicable to carry out the necessary adaptations to enable the tenant to live independently in their own home, we will support the tenant to find

alternative accommodation which matches their housing requirement and need, making best use of our existing stock.

10.8. NSDC Housing Maintenance and Asset Management and Housing Services Business Units will work collaboratively to identify complex adaptation cases at an early stage and aim to match existing tenants to more suitable accommodation, where appropriate through a direct offer. For those that are not tenants seeking to move into a NSDC property then this group will be proactive in finding a suitable property, based on the OT 'Housing Needs Assessment' that will avoid or minimise the need to adapt.

10.9 Tenants can apply for DFG if refused under NSDC aids and adaptations.

11. Budget

11.1 NSDC Housing Services will make financial provision to reflect the estimated demand for adaptations each forthcoming financial year.

11.2 NSDC will normally provide individual adaptations subject to the criteria of this policy, available funding, and it being the most effective solution and/or use of the housing stock.

11.3 NSDC will consider all adaptation requests where the estimated cost of works required does not exceed £10,000. For any single or multiple requests where the cost is likely to be greater, then advice and/or approval will be sought from a Senior Manager. In cases over £20,000, a Business Manager will be consulted before progressing the work and recourse to the Director-Housing, Health & Wellbeing may be required and ultimately a decision from SLT.

11.4 If a major adaptation is placed on hold, NSDC will write to the tenant involved explaining the circumstances associated with the delay and anticipated timescale to resolve their adaptation needs. A further update shall be sent in writing at a minimum of every 3 months to keep the customer informed.

11.5 When an adaptation is funded in part by a body other than the NSDC, the works will need to be approved by an OT, the funding body and NSDC. In this situation the policies and procedures of the other party may also need to be applied.

11.6 NCC's OT teams are able to provide recommended equipment that meets eligible social care needs free of charge.

11.7 Any and all statutory entitlements via the assessment framework override internal NSDC funding procedures.

12. Recycling adaptations

12.1 Where possible adaptations will be recycled at the point of re-letting a property by allocating the adapted property to a person needing the adaptation.

12.2 If the above is not possible, NSDC may remove and store adaptations from locations where they are no longer required. A process to log and monitor the make, model, age and condition of the items and review this on a regular basis with our contractors, is in place.

12.3 Examples of equipment that can be removed and recycled include:

- Stair lifts where they are not serving a first-floor adapted shower room.
- Hoists.
- Changing benches.
- Rise and fall baths
- Wash/Dry toilets including bio-bidet seats.

12.4 The above are removed and stored by the relevant contractor as part of their contractual arrangements. On occasions the contractor may, with prior consent of NSDC, be able to use the stored equipment on a private contract. In these circumstances NSDC will make the decision whether it is in its best interests to permit the use elsewhere and agree a resale value to be reimbursed via a sales credit note to the adaptations budget.

12.5 Some adaptations are not recyclable, for example, level access showers. These will not be removed until they have reached the end of their lifecycle except in exceptional circumstances. All adaptations of this nature will be classed as an attribute to the property and treated as such.

12.6 Where an item of specialist equipment such as a stair lift or hoist reaches the end of its usable life or becomes obsolete or too costly to repair then, before replacing such equipment, NSDC will require the tenant to seek a new OT assessment/referral to ensure that their needs have not changed since the original equipment was installed.

13. Contractor arrangements

13.1 The delivery of the aids and adaptations service will usually require contractor support, particularly with regards to major adaptations. This support may also be required to deliver more specialist adaptations such as stairlifts and hoists.

13.2 All contracts shall be procured in accordance with NSDC's financial regulations. Wherever possible, contracts will be procured using joint procurement methods or collaborative purchasing groups to maximise value for money. Long term engagements will also be considered to increase value for money and establish improved joint working arrangements.

13.3 Several key arrangements shall be in place to ensure that the service received is in accordance with the detail and standards of this policy:

1. Compliance with company expectations with regards to customer care. This is part of the tender conditions.
2. Ensuring key staff have received Equality and Diversity training.

3. Providing the contractor with details of vulnerable and or disabled tenants to ensure they take necessary actions in providing the best possible service.
4. Providing the contractor with the preferred contact methods of our tenants where work is to be undertaken prior to it commencing.
5. The contractor shall notify tenants when works are planned and offer an appointment if required.
6. The contract terms and conditions shall specify the key performance indicators that they are required to meet.

13.4 To ensure that the contractors adhere to the contract terms and conditions, and that they are performing to expected levels, monthly contract monitoring arrangements shall be in place between NSDC's employees and the representatives from the contractor. These arrangements shall cover issues such as, but not limited to:

- Forthcoming workload
- Current performance
- Rectification processes (if required)
- Complaints
- Compliments
- Equality and diversity issues
- Health & Safety

13.5 A system of undertaking appropriate quality checks will be maintained to ensure the desired levels of quality are maintained.

14. Servicing and maintenance

14.1 Following the installation of certain types of adaptations into our tenant's homes it is essential and, in some cases, a statutory requirement, to have in place an effective servicing and/or maintenance schedule. NSDC undertakes this responsibility as outlined below.

14.2 NSDC shall ensure that funding is available annually to an appropriate level to meet the ongoing servicing and maintenance requirements of adaptations that have been installed.

14.3 NSDC will maintain an up-to-date record of all major adaptations installed.

14.4 A programme will be in place to undertake annual servicing and maintenance of stair lift and lifting equipment in line with current legislation and best practice. The servicing will be concluded by appropriate certification provided by the servicing contractor.

- 14.5 All new adaptation installations that require insurance checks to comply with statutory legislation will be notified to the relevant insurance company in a timely manner.
- 14.6 All defects noted from either the annual servicing or insurance checks will be completed in a timely manner.
- 14.7 Once adaptations have been installed, we will maintain and repair these through the Responsive Repairs Service to ensure they remain effective and in good working order. These works will be raised and delivered in accordance with the appropriate standard repair timescales. Appliances provided at time of initial works will not be maintained by NSDC. For example, cookers and hobs installed at the time of a kitchen adaptation will be the responsibility of the tenant.

15. Training

- 15.1 In order to ensure that adaptations are delivered effectively by employees involved in the process, training is essential.
- 15.2 The following mechanisms are in place to ensure employees provide an effective service in accordance with the guidelines set out within this policy:
 - 1. Front line employees receive training relating to the general adaptations service and how and who to signpost tenant enquiries to.
 - 2. Key employees involved in the adaptations process and likely to receive minor adaptation requests will receive basic training from the NCC OT team. This training covers what are minor adaptations and any special considerations that are necessary when delivering these.
- 15.3 The above training shall be refreshed periodically, as required.

16. Monitoring and review

- 16.1 NSDC will ensure that the contents of this policy are delivered effectively by the implementation of a robust series of measures.
- 16.2 A proportion of tenants receiving adaptation works will be contacted to ask for their opinion about the service they received. The results of this survey will be recorded and reported against. Any unsatisfied responses will be followed up through NSDC's complaints procedure, where necessary.
- 16.3 We will periodically review the service with tenants and communicate any changes to all tenants.
- 16.4 We will aim to deliver improvements to service, and we will review the level of service provided by engaging tenants in evaluating customer satisfaction.

16.5 This policy will be monitored regularly and reviewed every 3 years to ensure that it remains suitable for tenants needs, including an updated Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

16.6 The aids and adaptations process will be monitored through management information that will be produced regularly to demonstrate the current performance levels.

16.7 Periodically NSDC's Aids and Adaptations Service shall be benchmarked with other similar service providers. This is to ensure that the service offered is being delivered effectively, takes account of current best practice, and represents value for money.

17. Performance

17.1 In order to ensure performance is delivered to a high standard, NSDC measure the following areas of service delivery against local performance indicators:

- Number of working days to complete minor adaptations from receipt of request.
- Number of working days to complete major adaptations from receipt of an Occupational Therapist Major Adaptation Care Plan Referral.
- Overall time to complete major adaptations from when the tenant makes contact for an Occupational Therapist assessment to when the work is completed.
- Overall customer satisfaction with the Adaptations Service.

18. Advertising

18.1 The Council will ensure that this policy is clearly promoted through its website.

19. Policy review

19.1 NSDC will instigate the review of this policy on a three-yearly basis, and any associated documents.

19.2 An additional review process may be required following:

- New legislation
- Emerging best practice
- Case law affecting the contents of this policy
- Day to day operational issues

19.3 Any review which takes place will be done in conjunction with partners to ensure compatibility with existing strategies and service development.

20. Comments on the policy and service

If you wish to comment on this policy or the service you should do so in the first instance by writing to:

Castle House
Great North Road
Newark on Trent
Nottinghamshire
NG24 1BY

Or by emailing housing@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk