

**Aids and Adaptations Assistance Policy**

**Customer Friendly Version**

**April 2024**

**Introduction**

This is a guide to the Aids and Adaptations Assistance Policy. Our goal is to help residents live independently, safely, and healthily in their community for as long as possible. We do this by providing aids and adaptations to homes or assisting residents in moving to a more suitable home.

We use our powers under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 to offer both traditional and new discretionary grants. These grants help residents meet their needs by providing independence, reducing hospital stays, preventing injuries, supporting well-being, and easing pressure on healthcare services.

The Aids and Adaptation Assistance Policy considers various legislation and guidance to ensure that we assist households fairly.

Aids and adaptations can help you or someone in your household, if:

* You or they are struggling in the home and find everyday activities difficult due to a disability
* Your current home is not suitable for yours or their needs after leaving the hospital

If you want to read the full Aids and Adaptations Assistance Policy, then you can find it online:
[www.rotherham.gov.uk/improvements-repairs/get-help-home-adaptations](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/improvements-repairs/get-help-home-adaptations)

**Working together to develop the policy**

This policy was created jointly by Housing Services, Health & Social Care, and Children’s Services, to provide a range of assistance options for people with disabilities in Rotherham.

Customer feedback has been crucial in developing this policy. We gathered input from various sources and interviewed customers who have gone through the adaptations process.

We have closely collaborated with the Rotherham Federation's (Rother Fed) Tenant Scrutiny Panel to improve this service according to what our customers need.

**Funding**

The Council must provide mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants to eligible disabled people.

The funding used for Council tenants who need assistance is funded from the Council’s Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This budget can only be used on Council-owned properties.

The funding used for Private Households is received from the government via Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding.

The Council’s Aids & Adaptations policy will treat all customers as equal and fair as possible whether Council or Private residents. The policy covers grants for disabled people in all housing types, with any specific criteria clearly explained.

The Council also offers discretionary grants, which are provided subject to the resources being available. They can be withdrawn by the Council at any time without notice.

**Types of aids and adaptations and how to apply**

**Minor fixings**

This adaptation:

* Costs under £1,000
* No financial assessment (means test) is required
* Should be completed within 7 working days once order placed with a contractor
* Can only request 2 minor fixings. If more than 2 are needed, then it would be classed as a minor adaptation

Minor fixings include:

* Grab rails
* Key safes
* Lever tap adjusters
* Wooden stair rails

How to apply:

* For minor fixings please call the Council’s Housing Repairs Team on 01709 336009

**Minor adaptations**

This adaptation:

* Costs under £1,000
* Requires an assessment to be completed by an Occupational Therapist or other trained practitioner to see what is required
* No financial assessment (means test) is required
* Work should start within 28 working days once order placed with a contractor

Examples of minor adaptations include:

* Tubular steel handrails
* Easy going steps
* Additional electrical sockets (for disability equipment)
* Automatic lighting at front door

How to apply:

* For minor adaptations please call the Council’s Social Care Contact Team on 01709 822330

**Major adaptations**

This adaption:

* Costs over £1,000
* Requires an assessment to be completed by an Occupational Therapist or other trained practitioner to see what is required
* Requires a financial assessment (means test) unless you are a Council tenant

Examples of Major adaptations include:

* Level access shower
* Concrete ramps
* Stair lifts
* Door widening
* Extensions

How to apply:

* For major adaptations please call the Council’s Social Care Contact Team on 01709 822330

**Eligibility**

To be eligible for assistance, the person needing the aids and adaptations must:

* Be disabled
* Plan to live at the property for 5 years (which is the length of the grant). This may be shorter if the person is terminally ill

For the purposes of a Disabled Facilities Grant a person is disabled if:

* Their sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired
* They have a mental disorder or impairment of any kind
* They are physically substantially disabled by illness, injury or impairment

**Types of grants available**

The table below shows you the types of grants and who is eligible for each. Grants will be discussed with you when you complete an application and after you have had an assessment.

Minor fixings and minor adaptations do not need a financial assessment (means test), and are limited to £1,000.

There are conditions for all of these grants. The complete list of conditions can be seen in the full version of the Aids and Adaptations Assistance Policy. A summary of the conditions that apply to all of the below grants are:

* The applicant must be eligible for the Disabled Facilities Grant
* **Private and Housing Association tenants**
	+ Must sign a certificate confirming that they intend for the next 5 years (grant period) to continue to live in that same property
	+ Landlord signs certificate of future occupation and agrees that tenant will reside there for five years
	+ Landlord consent for works to be carried out
* **Homeowners**
	+ Land charge will be registered against the property for a period of 10 years when the grant funding exceeds £5,000. Repayable upon sale or transfer of the property. Repayment to the Council of the proportion of the grant that exceeds £5,000, by demand. The amount repaid to the Council will not exceed £10,000.
	+ No local land charges where the application is being made for a child in a long-term foster placement
	+ Proof of ownership

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grant** | **Max funding** | **Financial eligibility** | **How it can help & conditions** | **Available to:** |
| **Council Tenants** | **Home- owners** | **Other Renters** |
| Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (Disabled Facilities Grant)This grant is to be used on major adaptations | Up to £30,000 | A means test is required for: Private & HousingAssociation tenant and homeowners. There is no means test for Council tenants  | Typically for larger items adaptations and alternations to the home to assist people to live independently in their home. Examples includes access ramps, alterations to the heights of light switches and electrical sockets, level access shower, extensions, and specialist equipment such as wash and dry toilets. | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Rapid Home Adaptations Grant(this is a discretionary grant) | Up to£10,000 | Must have no savings over £16,000 for households who are: private renters, housingassociation tenants and homeowners (we will need to see supporting documents for this) | For people who are at risk of being admitted to hospital (e.g. through falls). This grant will allow for a quicker installation of these adaptations: * Level access shower
* Shower over bath
* Stair lift (straight & curved)
* Ramped access to property (including door widening & level access door)
* Or a combination of 2

**Additional conditions*** Only one discretionary grant within a 3 year period from the approval date
 | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Time Critical Grants(this is a discretionary grant) | Up to £10,000 | No savings over £16,000 for households who are: private rented & , HousingAssociation tenants and homeowners (we will need to see supporting documents for this) | This is a fast-tracked grant and gives priority for work to be completed. It helps people who are nearing the end of their life or have serious neurological conditions that limit their life. It provides urgent equipment and changes to help them stay independent, safe, and improve their quality of life.Examples of works could include access to first floor facilities via stair lifts, access to the property via ramps, access to appropriate and specialist bathing and toilet facilities including level access showers.**Additional conditions*** Only one discretionary grant within a 3 year period from the approval date
* Has a condition with a diagnosis, confirmed by the Occupational Therapist or appropriately trained practitioner which falls into any of the following categories:
* Diagnosis of a life limiting neurological condition i.e. Motor Neurone Disease
* The person is on the end-of-life pathway under their GP, a consultant or hospice care

The person has a government benefit as defined under the Department of Work and Pensions Special Rules nearing the end of life | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Relocation Grant(this is a discretionary grant) | Up to £10,0002 levels within this maximum limit£5,000 for relocation associated costs£5,000adaptation works to the new property. | No savings over £16,000 for households who are: private rented & Housingassociation tenants and homeowners (we will need to see supporting documents for this | This grant helps people move to a new home that suits their needs better, or when a major change in their current home isn't possible or when the landlord doesn't agree to the changes. The grant can cover costs like stamp duty, mortgage fees, estate agent fees, legal fees, and moving expenses, as long as you provide proof that the money was spent on these specific things.**Additional conditions*** Only one discretionary grant within a 3 year period from the approval date
* The proposed work on the existing property involves major aids and adaptations work costing over £10,000 and relocating is considered beneficial to the person and more cost effective if they moved to a home more suitable
* The Occupational Therapist or appropriately trained practitioner agrees the new property is suitable to meet the needs of the person with a disability
* Applicants who have been awarded a medical priority through the Council Housing Allocation Policy will not automatically be considered for such grant.
* Costs must be reasonable subject to satisfactory evidence that the expenditure
* Proof of new tenancy or purchase of property
* Evidence of costs
 | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Professional Fees Grant(this is a discretionary grant) | Up to £10,000  | No savings over £16,000 for households who are: private rented & Housingassociation tenants and homeowners (we will need to see supporting documents for this | This helps cover any extra fees before getting approval for a Disabled Facilities Grant. It could include costs from a private Occupational Therapist, architects, or surveyors. | **X** | ✔ | ✔ |
| Top-Up Grant | No upper limit (Each case considered on a case-by-case basis) | A means test is required for: private renters, housingassociation tenant and homeowners. There is no means test for Council tenant’s | When the cost of adaptations goes over the £30,000 limit of the Disabled Facilities Grant, the Council may offer extra help with a top-up payment. This additional funding is given on top of the mandatory grant to cover the essential adaptations. It is a last resort option for funding when needed adaptations exceed the grant limit. | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |

**Assessments**

All of our assessments are person-centred and look at the whole household.

When you call the Council to make your application, we will talk to you about what you are finding difficult, so that we know what type of adaptation you will need.

If an assessment by an Occupational Therapist or trained practitioner is needed, then there will usually be a wait of between 9 to 12 weeks depending on the urgency.

The Occupational Therapist or trained practitioner will come to your property and see what you need and what changes can be made. They consider if these changes are reasonable and possible. Factors like the age and condition of the home, how easy and cost-effective the changes are and the property's structure are some of the factors that are considered.

From the beginning, we will talk to you to find the best and most practical way to meet your needs. We will explore different options, such as rearranging rooms in the current home to suit the person with a disability or moving to a new property to help them stay independent.

If the case is complex, we may need to work with other departments such as Adult or Children’s Social Care where applicable.

To request an assessment, please contact the Council’s Social Care Contact Team on 01709 822330

**Means test**

A means test will be needed for every applicant who needs a major adaptation (except Council tenants).

The means test checks if the person with a disability or their spouse/partner needs to contribute financially towards the cost of the works. It looks at their income and savings. You will be required to pay for it all or a portion of the cost.

If the applicant is on a means-tested benefit, they will get a full grant, and will not have to make any financial contributions. Proof would need to be provided that the applicant is on a means-tested benefit. If an applicant is in receipt of one of the following benefits, they will not need to be means tested:

* Universal Credit
* Income Support
* Income-based Employment and Support Allowance (not contribution-based ESA)
* Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance (not contribution-based JSA)
* Guarantee Pension Credit (not Savings Pension Credit alone)
* Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit (where your annual income for the purposes of the tax credits assessment was below £15,050)
* Housing Benefit

Applications for children with disabilities that require adaptations do not require a means test.

After the assessment has been completed, you will be contacted by the Aids and Adaptations Team who will ask you for proof of your earnings and will complete a means test.

Where a contribution is required, the applicant should be notified and informed when payment should be made before any approved work commences.

**How works are delivered**

The Council Adaptations Service must notify an applicant as soon as reasonably practicable and not later than six months after the date of the application has been received from the Occupational Therapist or appropriately trained practitioner whether an application is approved or refused.

The legal requirement is for the Adaptations Service to complete adaptations within 12 months of a Disabled Facilities Grant application being approved.

The Adaptations Service uses its own approved contractors to deliver the works. However, for Private households, in certain circumstances, you may be able to use your own chosen contractor.

**Maintenance and warranties**

Once the adaptation has been installed in private rented or homeowner properties, the person who received the adaptation owns the equipment. This means they are in charge of maintaining it, fixing it if needed, and removing it when it's no longer necessary.

Every adaptation is provided with a minimum 1-year warranty. With some adaptations, extended warranties are also provided. Information on specific warranties will be provided to the applicant after the assessment.

When equipment is installed for Council tenants the Council will be responsible for its maintenance and repairs at the end of their initial warranty period. Information relating to maintenance and services will be provided to the tenant before and after the installation.

If the adaptation is no longer needed in private rented or homeowner properties, then the responsibility remains with them to remove it, and the Council will not pay for removal.

**Administration fees**

The Council will include a 15% administration fee of the overall cost of eligible works. For example, if the cost of work totals to £10,000 the overall cost of the grant award will be £11,500. (Includes £1,500 fee).

**Using your own contractors**

Applicants can choose to use their own contractors to deliver the works. However, if the Council finds out that:

* The application was wrong; or
* Works were started before the approval; or
* Works were not completed within 12 months; or
* The works cost less than expected; or
* The works were done by a different contractor, then the Council can refuse to pay, reduce the grant or even demand repayments

Payments will be made direct to the customer, sometimes in instalments once the work carried out has been checked by a qualified officer.

Where a Private customer chooses to use their own contactor, the Council cannot get involved should any issues arise in the future.

**Complaints**

If you are unhappy with the service or a decision regarding your adaptations, then you should first talk informally to the Aids and Adaptations Service Manager. If the issue is not resolved, then you can then request an investigation through the Council's complaint procedure.

Further details can be found online on the complaints procedure and how to make a formal complaint: [www.rotherham.gov.uk/council/complain-council-services](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/council/complain-council-services)

Aids & Adaptations contact number 01709 336009 – Option 7