

Policy name: Aids and Adaptations Policy and Procedure	
Section:	Housing
Exec responsible:	Director of Housing
Review by:	Housing & Customer Engagement Manager
Tenant review:	Yes
Authority to amend:	Chief Executive
Frequency of review:	Every 3 years
Last review:	November 2025
Next review:	November 2028
Responsibility for delivery:	Housing and Property services
Strategy:	Housing Strategy
Associated risk ID:	22- unpredictable increases in maintenance expenditure
Health & safety:	All aids and adaptations must be appropriate and fitted correctly
Equality & diversity:	Refusals are based on suitability and budget, our equality and diversity policy will be followed to ensure certain groups are not being adversely affected.
Associated costs and value for money:	Social value gained by residents being able to remain in their homes, refusing adaptations where there is under-occupation, can result in better use of housing stock, contractor reviews are completed, and quotations are sought to ensure Value for money.
Associated documents:	

VERSION CONTROL			
Version number:	Sections amended:	Date of update:	Approved by:
1.0	First issue in new template	June 2014 Bard	Board
1.1	DFG details amended.	November 2015	CE HB
2.0	Full review	June 2017	Board
3.0	Full Review	October 2025	CE HB

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1. Introduction

Cornerstone Housing recognises that home adaptations can significantly enhance the independence, well-being, and dignity of our customers. Adaptations improve access and functionality within the home, often enabling individuals to remain safely and independently in their homes for longer. We are committed to supporting older residents and those with disabilities by facilitating reasonable and practical aids and adaptations.

This policy is implemented in conjunction with the Aids and Adaptations process (**Appendix 1**) and outlines:

- Types of assistance available (Minor and Major Adaptations)
- Eligibility requirements
- Assessment of applications
- Terms and conditions
- Monitoring and review arrangements
- Procedure if Cornerstone Housing cannot meet the assessed needs of the residents

2. Aims and Objectives

- Enable residents to live safely and independently by providing access and essential facilities
- Ensure fair, transparent, and consistent decision-making for necessary, reasonable, and practical adaptations
- Enhance tenant confidence, dignity, and quality of life
- Provide advice and assistance to optimise the use of housing stock
- Ensure efficient and effective use of budget to deliver value for money

3. Legal Framework

In accordance with the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, Cornerstone Housing will only carry out adaptations deemed reasonable and practicable, considering the age, condition and construction of the dwelling.

4. Eligible Works for Disabled Occupants

- Facilitating access to and from the dwelling
- Making the dwelling safe for the disabled tenant and other occupants
- Enabling safe and suitable access to living room, bedroom, toilet, wash basin, bath/shower
- Facilitating food preparation and cooking
- Simplifying use of heating, lighting controls, and ventilation

- Suitable smoke/fire detection – visual beacons, vibrating alarms etc.
- Easing movement to enable care for another occupant
- Facilitating safe access to and from a garden

Applications will be considered when:

- For Major Adaptations - Social Services or relevant authority confirms the works are necessary and appropriate
- The works are reasonable and practicable considering the property's age, type, and condition

4. Procedure for Unmet Needs

If Cornerstone cannot provide large adaptations, the tenant and referring agency will be informed. Residents will be signposted to alternative resources, and a move to more suitable accommodation may be considered.

5. Categories of Home Adaptations

These fall into two categories:

- Minor
- Major

5.1 Minor Adaptations (Funded by Cornerstone Housing)

Minor adaptations are simple installations that do not require structural changes. These include grab rails, stair rails, and bath rails. They support independence and do not require an Occupational Therapist (OT) referral. Requests that do not alter the property's fabric will be approved up to an annual expenditure per property of £500. If changes to the fabric of the building are required, a surveyor will assess feasibility.

Examples of minor adaptations include:

- Handrails
- Additional stair rails
- Outside handrails by steps
- Half steps to doors
- Window winders
- Lever taps
- Level internal thresholds
- Moving door intercoms
- Door frame/wall protectors
- Relocating sockets/switches
- Wider paths

(This list is not exhaustive)

5.2 Major Adaptations (Funded by DFG or External Sources)

Major adaptations involve significant changes, such as level access showers, stair lifts, and ceiling hoists. These require consultation with Social Services and an OT assessment. The maximum DFG grant is £30,000, but additional funding may be available.

Requests must be referred to Devon County Council's OT Service. Cornerstone will assist with referrals. Adaptations must be necessary, appropriate, and reasonable, considering both short- and long-term needs and property suitability. A joint visit by an OT and Cornerstone Surveyor may be arranged to assess viability.

Examples of major adaptations include:

- Stairlifts
 - Through floor lifts
 - Step lifts
 - Ramps
 - Wet rooms/Walk-in showers
 - Hoists and tracks
 - Alternative Heating systems
 - Vehicular hard standings
 - Widening doorways
 - Mobility standard kitchens
 - Altering entry/accessways
- (This list is not exhaustive)

5.3 Eligibility Requirements

Applicants with a recognised disability affecting their ability to carry out day-to-day activities are eligible for Major Adaptations if:

- They are a Cornerstone Housing tenant.
- They are a child, spouse, partner, or immediate household member of a Cornerstone Housing tenant, and the address is their primary and only home.

All Cornerstone Housing residents are eligible for Minor Adaptations.

In exceptional cases, referrals for non-primary residents will be considered on an individual basis taking into account the non-resident, resident and the impact of the housing adaptation.

Requests for adaptations to properties with an active Right to Buy or Right to Acquire application will not be considered.

Requests from residents registered with Devon Home Choice for a move will be considered on their individual circumstances. In these circumstances, we may only be able to offer a temporary solution rather than a permanent adaptation.

We will work collaboratively with the local authority in assessing the suitability of the home and any adaptations that may be required for prospective residents.

Requests outside this policy or where exceptional circumstances exist, a full review and consultation with all relevant staff members and external stakeholders will be undertaken.

5.4 Assessment of Applications

Minor Adaptations are deemed reasonable and practicable and do not require assessment if they do not affect the property fabric – the physical components of a building that form its structure, such as the walls, floors, roof, etc.

Major Adaptations are assessed case-by-case considering:

- Property age, type, condition, and suitability.
- Housing Statement of Need (HSON) referral from Devon County Council's Occupational Therapy Service.
- Applicant circumstances including degenerative conditions, recovery prospects, and household suitability.

5.5 Restrictions

Adaptations may be restricted or refused if:

- Suitable alternative accommodation is available or expected within a reasonable timeframe.
- Costs exceed DFG limits (£30,000); discretionary funding may be explored.
- Parking bays or ramps compromise safety or accessibility or usability the area.
- Future re-letting of the property would be adversely affected.
- The property is under-occupied or has access issues (e.g., upper-floor flats without lifts).
- The property requires major repairs.
- The tenant is subject to possession proceedings
- Minor Adaptations may still be carried out if Major Adaptations are deemed impracticable.

Cornerstone Housing makes decisions on reasonableness and practicability after consultation with the resident and Occupational Therapists.

Major Adaptations are generally not approved where there are pending medical procedures, where a permanent adaptation is not required; temporary adaptations may be considered.

Declined referrals may result in rehousing recommendations, supported by Housing Officers and Occupational Therapists.

6. Maintenance of Equipment

Adaptations installed or retained by Cornerstone Housing will be maintained and serviced as appropriate, as per the installation agreement. If equipment deteriorates beyond economic repair, it may be renewed or removed.

Exceptions include specialist systems (e.g., tracked hoists) typically maintained by Devon County Council Occupational Therapy team. Maintenance responsibilities will be confirmed prior to installation.

7. Void Properties

Cornerstone Housing needs to make the best use of homes with adaptations suitable for people with disabilities. It is therefore appropriate that when a property becomes empty where adaptations have been undertaken in properties such as ground floor units or bungalows they will not be removed. If they have been fitted in family-style accommodation every attempt will be made to find an applicant who requires such an adaptation. If this is not possible, consideration will be given to removing the adaptation if it is deemed more practical.

8. Access to Gardens

Cornerstone Housing recognises that access to gardens is a legitimate entitlement for residents, particularly where it supports independence, wellbeing, and quality of life for disabled occupants.

Requests for adaptations to facilitate garden access will be considered where they meet one or both of the following criteria:

- Facilitating access to and from a garden by a disabled occupant.
- Making access to a garden safe for a disabled person.

Given the varied nature of garden layouts and landscaping, each request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The following examples illustrate the types of works that may be considered reasonable and practicable:

- Provision of handrails or replacement of unsafe paths/paving to improve safety.
- Alterations to doorways to enable access from a flat to an existing balcony.
- Provision of clear level access to a garden, where feasible given the garden's geography.
- Access to a patio area immediately adjacent to the property.
- Access to a shared garden or yard area, provided the adaptation does not make access unsafe for other residents.

The following works will not normally be considered reasonable or practicable and will not be funded:

- Provision of wheelchair-accessible paths around the entire garden.
- Installation of a new patio area not immediately adjacent to the property.
- Provision of multiple ramps or step-lifts where access can be achieved via a single route.
- Adaptations solely to enable access to washing lines, bird feeders, or fish ponds.
- Construction of raised planting beds.

9. Rent and Service Charge Implications

The rent of a property may be reviewed following an adaptation, for example, if the works completed has resulted in an additional bedroom at the property.

A service charge may be introduced where adaptations require maintenance contracts for example a stair lift or through floor lift to be taken out to maintain/service equipment installed. Residents should be made aware of this and their written consent to meet the service charge is obtained prior to installation.

10. Resident Satisfaction

Cornerstone aims to acknowledge receipt of all requests for adaptations within five working days.

If a resident is unhappy with the decision that has been made regarding their request for an adaptation, they can pursue the matter through Cornerstone's Formal Complaints procedure.

Cornerstone will abide by existing regulatory requirements and legislation to ensure that fair and equitable services are available to all customers regardless of age, disability, race, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief or sexual identity.

Cornerstone will survey all customers who have had an adaptation completed by us or our appointed contractors and monitor customer satisfaction with the service.

11. Monitoring and Review

We will monitor

- The number and type of requests received
- The spend vs budget
- Performance against customer service standards

If there are any relevant changes in legislation or best practice between the date of this policy and the next scheduled review, we will review at the time changes.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Aids & Adaptation Process

Request Received by CSA Team	Acknowledge and respond within five working days of request.
CSA Team to complete the Adaptation request form	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the Adaptation request form 2. Raise a task for the HO with the attached form.
CSA Team pass to HO for the patch	Appointment made to visit within 14 days.
Visit carried out by HO	<p>Discuss and complete report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what adaptations required, • has GP/OT been involved in the request • medical conditions, limitations of living in their current homes, • if minor adaptation refer to compliance to arrange. • If major adaptation give housing options advice, • inform them on the next part of the process, to include scheduled surveyors visit, OT report, DFG advice or self-fund choose their own contractor, (explain waiting lists for major adaptations). • Obtain supporting medical information. • Record discussion and advice given.
If using Housing Options	Assist in completing the DHC application and House Exchange, and complete the management transfer form to enable all housing options to be considered.
Information passed to Property Services Manager and Housing & Customer Engagement Manager	HO to state whether minor or major adaptation, their recommendations about whether the residents' needs can be met in the current home.
Scheduling Team – minor adaptation	Arrange necessary work and schedule an appointment with the resident.
Scheduling Team – major adaptation	<p>Notified by local authority whether funding for DFG, (Via Income Lead and Compliance.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If notified that this is approved and funding is in place, schedule a surveyor to visit the property to ensure that the major adaptation can be carried out in their current home. • Reiterate the advice the HO has given, pass to the Compliance Team or Property Services Manager and Housing & Customer Engagement Manager. • If rent plus cannot have adaptations, (unless tenant requests this from the rent information).

Appendix 2 - Maintenance Agreement

Aids and Adaptions - Maintenance Agreement

Between CORNERSTONE (the landlord) and _____ (the tenant)

I, _____ agree to allow regular access for the maintenance of the _____ installed in my home, _____, under the aids and adaptions policy.

I understand that Cornerstone or their contractor will contact me by letter and telephone to make an appointment and that I need to allow access to my home for the servicing.

I understand that if I do not allow access for this maintenance and servicing that Cornerstone may apply to the courts for an access injunction to allow this work to take place. I understand I will be responsible for any costs incurred in doing this.

I accept any cost to Cornerstone which might arise by my failure to comply with this agreement.

Signed by tenant

Date.....

Signed by Cornerstone.....

Date.....

Appendix 3 - Aids and Adaptions Request

Tenant Name(s)	
Address	
Adaptation requested for resident/permanent household member?	
Type of Adaptation?	
Reason for the Adaptation	
Are they registered on House Exchange?	
Are they registered on Devon Home Choice?	
Who is their GP, (name and address of surgery)?	
Do they have an Occupational Therapist, (name and address of OT)?	
Have they requested this adaptation previously?	
If they have and this has been refused, the history of the refusal should be added here.	