

# Aids and Adaptations policy



Approved by Policy Forum August 2017



**This policy sets out Colne's approach to dealing with requests for aids and/or adaptations to its properties.**

**Review date: August 2020**

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## 1. Policy statement

Colne is committed to ensuring that its residents are provided with advice, support and assistance to enable them to live independently. This may include facilitating the provision of aids or making adaptation to its properties.

This policy sets out how Colne will deal with requests for adaptations, either directly or in partnership with local authorities.

## 2. Policy scope

Colne's aids and adaptations service is available to all tenants and registered occupants residing in a Colne property (subject to eligibility criteria). People living at the address who are not registered with Colne will not be considered.

Leaseholders, Shared Owners and residents in an intermediate rented or private sector leased property are excluded from this service. However, Leaseholders must seek permission from Colne before making adaptations to the communal or exterior areas.

## 3. Principles

Colne will only consider adaptation requests that are supported by an Occupational Therapist's assessment.

If the eligibility criteria (section 4) are not met, Colne will support the person (as far as is practicable) to move to a more appropriate property, considering what is the most reasonable and practical solution. This may mean a move to a non-Colne property.

Any adaptation where the number of bedrooms is amended, may result in a change to the rent charged for that property.

Requests for major adaptations outside of the structure of the property or associated with such work (such as a door replacement where an access ramp is being installed) will be referred for funding through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) process, administered by the local authority.

If specialist equipment is required (for example specialist toilets), these will be signposted through the DFG process at no cost to Colne.

Stair lifts will not be provided by Colne as the restriction in mobility may highlight that a resident is not appropriately housed. Help and assistance would be offered to seek a more appropriate property, or the resident will be signposted through the DFG process.

On-going maintenance or servicing of any equipment provided via a DFG is the responsibility of the resident.

If specialist equipment or a stair lift previously supplied by Colne becomes 'beyond economical repair', Colne will refer the resident to the local authority for re-assessment through the DFG process.

If a resident wishes to complete their own adaptations (including work via the DFG process), the resident or their representative must apply for Landlord's Consent. Colne will consider granting consent to perform these provided the adaptations will:

- Be fully paid for by resident or agency making the request
- Meet an identified need
- Not have a detrimental impact on other residents
- Be technically feasible
- Not adversely affect the future ability to let the property
- Not result in on-going maintenance costs to Colne
- Be carried out by a competent and suitably qualified person
- Be available for inspection by Colne during installation and following completion

Colne may consider a contribution of up to 40% of the total DFG on a case by case basis, dependent on agreement with the local authority and budgetary considerations.

In accordance with housing legislation, Colne has the right to claim back properties with major adaptations if the person requiring the adaptation did not move into the property or are no longer making full use of the adaptations. For example, if the property was acquired through succession or the resident needing the adaptations found alternative accommodation.



## 4. Eligibility criteria

With the exception of those in receipt of Housing Benefit which covers under-occupation due to medical needs, we will not carry out any adaptations if a person is 'under-occupying' their home. If a property is considered to be under occupied by the Gateway to Homechoice allocation rules and a resident applies for an adaptation, Colne will support them in moving to an appropriate property as the preferred option.

Any adaptations considered to be inappropriate or impractical will not be considered. In this case Colne will support the person to move to a property which meets their needs.

Any resident who has been with Colne for less than 12 months and has not disclosed details of pre-existing conditions before the start of their tenancy, will not be considered for major adaptations to their home for the first 12 months of their tenancy.

Anyone in the household who has a current Notice of Seeking Possession being undertaken against them will not be considered eligible for adaptations to the home until the tenancy is no longer under threat of termination.

Any resident who uses mutual exchange to move out of an adapted property that meets their need into an un-adapted property will not be considered eligible for adaptations to their home, unless it can be demonstrated that there was reasonable cause to be rehoused and that this was the most appropriate way to leave the previous property. The resident would, however, be eligible to apply for a DFG and Colne may grant permission for minor adaptations on a case by case basis.

## 5. Definitions

**Adaptation** – A modification to a disabling environment or structures in order to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for individuals and their families.

**Competent and suitably qualified person** – A professionally qualified person who is able to evidence that they are fully insured to carry out the works.

Colne will not process any new requests for aids and adaptations where a current application for Right to Buy, Right to Acquire or subsequent scheme is active.

Exceptional circumstances to these criteria, as determined by an Occupational Therapist, will be considered by the Head of Asset Management and Investment and Head of Customer Services to ensure a balanced approach.

Aids and adaptations costing £1,000 or less will be funded by Colne's own annual aids and adaptations budget. Colne will aim to ensure that minor works are completed within 8 weeks from receipt of the Occupational Therapist's report. Minor aids and adaptations may include lever taps, grab rails shower seats and window winders or provision of non-slip flooring.

**Disabled person** – Someone with a mental or physical impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

**Resident** – Any tenant or registered occupant residing in a Colne property.

## 6. Statutory and regulatory requirements

This policy will comply with statutory, regulatory and legal requirements including but not limited to the following:

The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (sections 1 and 2). This places a duty on Social Services to assist disabled persons in obtaining suitable adaptations within their homes.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1970/44/contents>

S.23 of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 Provides for the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) administered by local authorities. This is mandatory for certain adaptations and means tested. Residents may also be required to contribute to the cost of the works irrespective of value (subject to a test of financial resources). Authorities also have powers to make discretionary grants.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/53/contents>

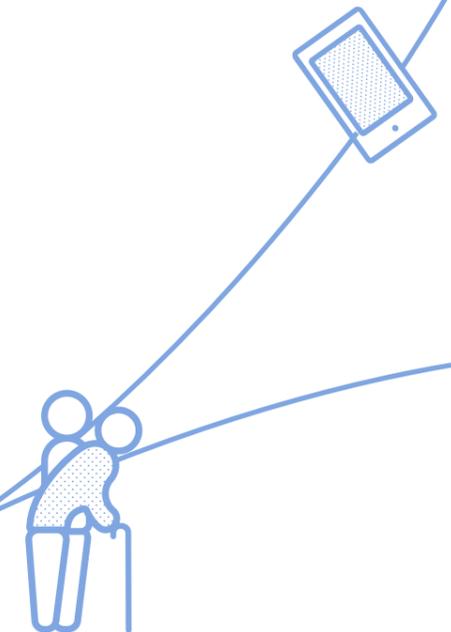
Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This provides a definition of a disabled person for the purpose of this policy. Part 3 of this Act requires service providers to make 'reasonable adjustments' to services without which it would be impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to use the service. Whilst this legislation refers to public spaces and does not govern the inside of resident's homes, Colne will work towards ensuring both public and private spaces are accessible for all our residents.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/50/contents>

## 7. Equality and diversity

Colne wants to ensure that customers receive services which recognise issues of discrimination as well as celebrating their diversity. We are committed to eliminating all forms of unfair discrimination and promoting equality.

The Equality Act 2010 (as amended 2014) requires that reasonable adjustments be made by public bodies in the provision of goods and services to people who have the protected characteristic of disability. This duty is delegated to Registered Providers of social housing by the regulator, the Homes and Communities agency and its successor bodies.



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