



Adaptations Policy

What you need to know about getting an adaptation in Yorkshire Housing.

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Yorkshire Housing is committed to supporting the wellbeing needs of our customers who are experiencing difficulty living in their home due to age or disability. We will do this by providing an efficient and effective adaptation service that offers value for money and meets the individual needs of our customers.
- 1.2 The policy and associated service will strike a balance between continuously improving levels of provision and customer service, making best use of housing stock and the need to achieve value for money.
- 1.3 The Equality Act 2010 states “...landlords will be obliged to make certain reasonable adjustments if requested by the tenant. Reasonable adjustments do not include the removal or alteration of a physical feature but do include providing auxiliary aids or services, changing practices, policies and procedures and/or changing the term of the letting.” While there is no statutory responsibility upon individual housing providers to provide adaptations for their tenants, the Homes England expects them to make provision to assist in the delivery of adaptations to their tenants.
- 1.4 For the purpose of this policy, an adaptation is an alteration or addition to any aspect of a property, which is provided in order to make it easier or safer for use by an older or a disabled person. This may be the tenant or a member of their family or household and throughout this policy references to the tenant will include their family or household. The assessment of the specific needs of the tenant and recommendations of what adaptation work is required would usually result from an assessment from an Occupational Therapist.

2. Policy Aims

- 2.1 Housing adaptations can play a significant role in allowing people to live independently, and in comfort and safety in their own home.
- 2.2 This document sets out Yorkshire Housing’s policy for the provision of adaptations for customers living within their properties, either in continued occupancy of their own home or in another property that is suitably adapted or that can be adapted to meet their needs.

- 2.3 It also sets out our principles regarding giving permission for adaptations where customers are shared owners or leaseholders.
- 2.4 This policy outlines the approach Yorkshire Housing will take to:
- Provide adaptations.
 - Remove adaptations.
 - Give permission for adaptations to shared owners and leaseholders.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 This policy refers to tenants as customers but doesn't include shareholders and leaseholders and applies to all customers who require adaptations, alterations and enhancement to their home. The adaptations or alterations may be required for either the customer themselves or a family member permanently residing at the property.
- 3.2 Adaptations are alterations or additions to any aspect of a dwelling to make it easier or safer for use by a person who is vulnerable or affected by a long-term condition or disability.
- 3.3 A person is formally defined as having a disability under the Equality Act 2010 if they have a 'physical or mental impairment', and 'the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on (the person's) ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- 3.4 A person may be eligible for help under this policy even if they are not registered as disabled, upon recommendation by an Occupational Therapist or Trusted Assessor in the respect of the Care Act 2014.
- 3.5 A person is considered as vulnerable under this policy if they are temporarily or permanently unable to care for themselves and their interests, either through a mental or physical cause; and may be open to risks of psychological and physical harm or being exploited for other people's benefit.

4. Adaptations

- 4.1 A minor adaptation is an adaptation defined simply as costing less than £1,000.
- 4.2 A complicated minor is an adaptation requiring a survey to quantify the adaptation or where the adaptation costs over a £1,000 but is not large enough to quantify as a major or a referral for a Disabled Facilities Grant.
- 4.3 A major adaptation is an adaptation that may involve a permanent change to the property. Major adaptations can include stair lift, through floor lifts, access ramps, wet rooms, and door widening. These will be referred for a Disabled Facilities Grant.

- 4.4 In exceptional situations where there is evidence of serious or potentially serious harm to a customer, Yorkshire Housing may consider fully funding major adaptations. We will not fund adaptations to leasehold or shared ownership properties.

Category	Example	Target completion
Minor	Grab rail Stair rails Keysafe Small half steps	28 Calendar days
Complicated Minor	Where equipment needs ordering / requires a site visit. i.e. external handrails/steps	28 Calendar days
Major	Where external factors impact on completion or specialist works required i.e. DFG	Individual targets set

NB. Yorkshire Housing have benchmarked their Minor target completions of 28 days against other Housing Association timescale targets.

5. Eligibility for Adaptations

- 5.1 All customers will receive advice and assistance regarding their housing options and alternatives open to them.
- 5.2 All requests for adaptations costing less than £1,000 will be carried out to meet the needs of the customer.
- 5.3 All requests for complicated minors in Yorkshire Housing properties will need to be assessed by Yorkshire Housing's Internal Adaptation's team and/or an Occupational Therapist, dependant on the adaptation required. A complicated minor and major adaptation can either be referred for a Disabled Facilities Grant or completed at the discretion of Yorkshire Housing.
- 5.4 Yorkshire Housing will only agree to completion of complicated minors and major adaptations where the work resolves the issues in the long term or makes significant improvement to the current situation.
- 5.5 All requests for a major adaptation will have to have a needs assessment from an Occupational Therapist and the adaptation will have to be in line with the recommendations documented within the assessment.
- 5.6 Yorkshire Housing will in agreement with each Local Authority contribute a percentage or an agreed lump sum towards the cost of a major adaptation, dependant on requirement. The remainder of the cost will be funded through a Disabled Facilities Grant managed by the relevant local authority.

- 5.7 If the cost of an adaptation is above £30,000 – the maximum allowed under Disabled Facilities Grant funding rules, then Yorkshire Housing may consider funding the balance if no other accommodation is available, or if other funding streams are exhausted i.e. Discretionary assistance from a grant as per the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.
- 5.8 In relation to an adaptation where a means test has been undertaken by the local authority and the customer has been asked to personally contribute to the adaptation, Yorkshire Housing will expect the customer to contribute as such to the adaptation. With discretion, Yorkshire Housing may consider contributing up to £1,000.
- 5.9 An adaptation will only be undertaken on customer homes or in communal areas for the benefit of our customers and/or family members living in their home.
- 5.10 Consideration will be given to Yorkshire Housing customers who need to transfer to a property with an adaptation or that can be adapted to meet their needs.
- 5.11 Yorkshire Housing has the discretion, in exceptional circumstances, to consider employing a consultant Occupational Therapist to assist customers with the Disabled Facilities Grant process.
- 5.12 Major adaptations will first involve liaison with the Place and Surveying teams to ensure the suitability of the property for the adaptation. Consideration will be given to the layout / and or location of the property and if the adaptation would negatively affect the future letting ability of the property.
- 5.13 Applicants for any form of adaptation must be a named customer on our Tenancy Agreement or registered on our records, as part of the customer's household and living at the property on a permanent basis. If they are aged over 18 years, they should also be registered on the Council Tax records and/or electoral roll for that address. Individuals who have no recourse to public funds or do not have the right to rent will not be eligible for assistance under the terms of this policy.
- 5.14 Yorkshire Housing will consider a family member returning to live in the property, for example, grandparent moving back into the care of the family when considering a request for adaptations.
- 5.15 In cases where a child is disabled and the parents are separated, adaptation works will usually only be completed at the property of principal residence (normally the residence of the parent who is in receipt of child benefit for that child).
- 5.16 Yorkshire Housing will consider new ways of working to support independent living using SMART technology, for example, fitting deaf alarms with strobe lighting to alert in the event of fire.
- 5.17 Yorkshire Housing will ensure customer choice is available in respect of materials and products where possible, factoring in particular needs, as well as other factors such as building regulations and value for money.

5.18 Yorkshire Housing will not give consent for a major adaptation in customer's homes unless agreed by the Head of Service, in the following circumstances:

- The family or household member who requires the adaptation is not a permanent occupant at the property.
- The property is over-crowded under the Allocations Policy.
- A Notice to Quit or Notice of Seeking Possession has been served for breach of tenancy (other than rent arrears).
- Customers who are applying for works to their current home and are registered for a transfer or mutual exchange to another property would need to withdraw their application to move before works will be carried out on their current home.
- Customers who are on the re-housing list within Yorkshire Housing, other associations or local authority.
- A possession or injunction order has been granted for breach of tenancy (other than rent arrears).
- A Right to Buy Application has been made.
- There is a Right to Acquire application with a live status.
- If Yorkshire Housing considers the cost of the adaptation to be too high, not reasonable or practicable and the customer can apply to move to a more suitable or a larger property, that is or can be adapted to meet their needs.

5.19 Where customers are in rent arrears, a decision will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Head of Service, considering their individual circumstances and repayment history as to whether the adaptation will be permitted.

5.20 Where disposal of a property is under consideration, an application for a major adaptation will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

5.21 If a customer refuses a reasonable offer of a suitable alternative accommodation, which meets their essential needs, a major adaptation will normally not be carried out in the property that they remain in.

5.22 A suitable alternative accommodation will be defined and agreed in discussion between Occupational Therapist and Yorkshire Housing and will take into consideration any information put forward by the customer.

5.23 Yorkshire Housing reserve the right to decline a request for an adaptation for applicants who have moved from a previously adapted property or a property that was considered suitable for their needs.

5.24 Where significant work has taken place at a property and the customer requiring the adaptation passes or is unable to remain at the property and permanently resides elsewhere, the remaining family members may be supported to move to a more suitable property.

6. Equipment

- 6.1 Permissions will be given for any type of equipment to be fitted within Yorkshire Housing properties on the basis that it is fitted subject to appropriate manufacture specifications and warranties. Yorkshire Housing will need to be provided with a copy of the warranty, along with details of who is liable for maintenance and servicing upon warranty expiry and removal of equipment once installed by the Local Authority.
- 6.2 Lifting Operation and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) does not apply to a stair lift fitted within a customer's home that is solely for their use and as such, Yorkshire Housing will not be responsible for maintaining and servicing the stair lift following warranty expiry.
- 6.3 Yorkshire Housing will assist our customers to obtain an extended warranty or provide them with Yorkshire Housing's maintenance service agreement for their equipment, which will be funded by the customer through a service charge.
- 6.4 Yorkshire Housing's maintenance service will be provided by competent contractors who will inspect and maintain the equipment on behalf of the customer. They will complete an annual inspection and Yorkshire Housing will arrange for any supplementary tests as required by the competent person based on their risk assessment of the equipment. Yorkshire Housing will provide an emergency call service for equipment, which can be accessed by all customers. This maintenance service will be arranged and managed by Yorkshire Housing and funded by the customer through a service charge.
- 6.5 Yorkshire Housing recommend that all equipment within their properties remain subject to either an extended warranty or a maintenance service agreement and will work with our customers to achieve this. Subject to customer choice, should they decide to make their own arrangements for servicing, they will be fully informed of their responsibility for maintenance of their equipment and that Yorkshire Housing will have no liability for any outcomes of failure to do so, in terms of personal injury to self or others; equipment failure; or damage to the property.
- 6.6 Customers can opt out of a Yorkshire Housing warranty and get their own warranty to cover maintenance and servicing, see equipment protocol.
- 6.7 Where equipment is fitted in a property that requires maintenance and servicing, the customer will be expected to allow access to those who perform this function at a reasonable time as to ensure that the equipment remains compliant to ensure Health and Safety is maintained.
- 6.8 Stair lifts should not be used by other family members not assessed for the equipment. Yorkshire Housing advises against this and liability for failure to adhering to this will be the responsibility of the customers.

- 6.9 In the situation where a customer no longer needs the equipment the customer or Local Authority will need to arrange for removal. In the absence of the customer and where a Local Authority is not responsible for the equipment Yorkshire Housing will arrange for removal. Where the Local Authority is responsible Yorkshire Housing will facilitate removal with them or carry out this task for a fee.
- 6.10 If there are other members within the household who wish to keep the lift, Yorkshire Housing will advise them to seek an assessment for an Occupational Therapy referral for suitability.
- 6.11 Yorkshire Housing will maintain accurate records of all servicing for the lifetime of the equipment.
- 6.12 LOLER will apply to hoists that are fitted within Yorkshire Housing properties and as such will be subject to the procedures and codes detailed within Yorkshire Housing's Lift Policy.
- 6.13 Yorkshire Housing will ensure that all hoists receive a six monthly examinations, and that maintenance service remains a key landlord responsibility.
- 6.14 If Yorkshire Housing are notified of a serious and significant defect, we will take the hoist out of service until the defect has been put right.
- 6.15 Other specialist equipment will be maintained through Yorkshire Housing's specialist contractors and customers will need to ensure that they allow access for maintenance work to be carried out.

7. Mobility Scooters

- 7.1 Mobility scooters are classed as a motor vehicle as opposed to prescribed equipment; therefore, Yorkshire Housing will not provide adaptations (for example, ramps, vehicle hard standings, door alterations, path alterations, the provision of electrical charging points, sockets, and storage facilities) for use of a scooter for customers or permanent members of the household with a mobility scooter.

8. Removing Adaptations

- 8.1 Major adaptations (including equipment/fittings) will be removed from properties if a technical assessment states that the adaptation cannot be repaired or is beyond economic repair. The customer will be referred to their Local Authority for a new assessment if still required.
- 8.2 Major adaptations will be removed if the property cannot be let with the adaptation in, in particular where the adaptation was specific to the needs of the previous occupant.
- 8.3 Yorkshire Housing will not remove a wet room and replace with a bath at the customers request unless there is an Occupational Therapy referral in place, which requires this.

- 8.4 Consideration will be given and all options will be explored for an adaptation in any communal areas to be removed on a case-by-case basis.

9. Right to Improve

- 9.1 Yorkshire Housing will support our customers to have the right to put in their own adaptations, such as a shower or stair lift. However, those improvements, adaptations, alterations or additions to their home must be completed with the permission of Yorkshire Housing in writing prior to the work starting via a right to improve form.
- 9.2 All necessary approvals such as planning and building regulations must be obtained by the customer and completion certifications provided to Yorkshire Housing.
- 9.3 A copy of maintenance agreements must also be provided to Yorkshire Housing. Customers will be responsible for all repairs and for the removal of the equipment on vacating the property, including any associated costs. Yorkshire Housing reserve the right to post inspect the quality of the work.

10. Shared Owners and Leaseholders

- 10.1 Yorkshire Housing will support Shared Owners and Leaseholders to put in adaptations at their own cost by signposting them to their local authority for assistance. Yorkshire Housing will not fund adaptations for Shared Owners and Leaseholders.
- 10.2 Such homeownership customers may have the right to put in their own adaptations, such as a shower or stair lift. However, those improvements, adaptations, alterations, or additions to their home must be completed with the permission of Yorkshire Housing.
- 10.3 We may agree to adaptations in Shared Ownership or Leasehold properties but before doing so, we must confirm that this can be carried out under the terms of the lease. We must also have written confirmation that all necessary approvals such as planning and building regulations have been obtained and that we are satisfied that the work would be carried out by competent contractor.

11. Statutory and Legislative Framework

- 11.1 The Equality Act 2010 refers to the duty to make reasonable adjustments depending on; amongst other criteria; how practicable the changes are, how much money and resources are available and the cost of making changes.
- 11.2 The legal principle for Disabled Facilities Grant is contained in the Housing, Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. The availability of a Disabled Facilities Grant is dependent on all three of the following criteria being met:
- The works are necessary and appropriate.

- The works are reasonable and practicable to carry out.
- The applicant's means-tested contribution (except for children) is less than the approved value of the grant.

12. Diversity and Inclusion Implications

- 12.1 Making sure that our policies are inclusive and ensure fair treatment for all is important to us. When developing this policy we've considered the implications for people, regardless of race, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, disability, religion, marital status, maternity, sexuality or sexual orientation, or age and we've assessed that there are no known negative effects. If you think we've got this wrong, please contact the policy owner.
- 12.2 This policy is intended to operate within the commitment to equality and diversity, including equal treatment regardless of race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or belief, with reasonable adjustments made where necessary in line with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- 12.3 Any literature that is required relating to this policy will be made available in the format required by our customers.
- 12.4 Each customer is invited to complete a satisfaction survey following adaptation work. The results of these are monitored by Yorkshire Housing Adaptation Management team to respond to any specific issues or trends and to identify areas for service improvement.

13. Reporting and Monitoring

- 13.1 This policy will be reviewed regularly to reflect current legislation and good practice.
- 13.2 The Adaptations performance is reported to our directors monthly in relation to; customer satisfaction with adaptations, adaptations completed in time and monthly spend.

14. Complaints and Appeals

- 14.1 Where a customer has a complaint regarding any aspect of an adaptation, this can be communicated via any of Yorkshire Housing's colleagues, either face to face or by any of the methods set out in the Yorkshire Housing Complaints and Feedback Policy. The same policy also gives full details on what to expect when raising a complaint including timescales.
- 14.2 Customers can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any time for advice via the following methods:
- Online form: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
 - Phone: 0300 111 3000
 - Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
 - In writing: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ

Date approved	5 June 2024
Approved by	Directors
Recommended / scrutinised by	Heads of Service, Directors
Summary of changes	Updating of policy
Frequency of review	3 Yearly
Next review date	November 2027
Policy owner	Sam Martin, Head of Compliance Delivery and Business Improvement
Policy author	Jo Irving, HIA Manager
Associated policies or guidelines	Equality Act 2010 Care Act 2014 Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 Lifting Operation and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER) Responsive Repairs Policy
Associated procedure	Active Asset Management Strategy