

Appendix A

Tandridge District Council

Aids and Adaptations Policy for Council Homes



1.0 Background

- 1.1 Tandridge District Council has a duty to consider the housing conditions in its District and have regards to the needs of disabled people and those with long term illness who live there. This duty includes the provision of adaptations in its own properties to meet the needs of disabled tenants.
- 1.2 This policy contributes towards the national independent living agenda for residents to enjoy improved health and wellbeing, prioritised locally through the Council's Housing Strategy, A Place to Call Home 2019 – 2023. Objectives Two and Three in the Council's Housing Strategy: Making the Best Use of Existing Housing and Meeting the Housing Needs of Vulnerable Households respectively, set out the Council's commitment to meet the needs of residents who are disabled or have long term illness and provides the strategic focus to develop local services that help improve the quality of life of residents.
- 1.3 This policy sets out the type of assistance available, eligibility requirements, the type of works the Council will approve, circumstances where the Council are unable to carry out adaptations, timescales, how demand for adaptations will be managed where there is a high demand that outweighs the annual budget, the complaints process and the monitoring and review arrangements for the provision of adaptations in Council properties.
- 1.4 The Council provides funding from its own budget to undertake adaptation works in its own homes through the Housing Revenue Budget each year but where a tenant is refused works under this policy, they have the right to make an application for a mandatory Disabled Facility Grant.
- 1.5 This policy has been developed to reflect the statutory requirements for disabled facility grants in the private sector.

2.0 Policy Aims

- 2.1 This policy aims to ensure that:
 - Disabled people and those suffering with long term illness are at the heart of this process;
 - The Council facilitates excellent communication with the disabled person and their families, as well as with any professionals and support agencies around them;
 - There is lawful sharing of information;

- The Council retains a stock of adapted homes for future reletting;
- Pressure is reduced on acute services and the need to access residential care is delayed or avoided by adapting the homes of secure tenants where feasible;
- The Council operates a service that offers suitable, practical and cost-effective solutions that best meets the needs of disabled people living in Council owned homes and includes:
 - Close working with housing allocations staff to make best use of housing stock;
 - Clear housing options advice to enable people to make informed choices about where they want to live;
 - Support and information to facilitate referrals and signposting to Surrey County Council Occupational Therapy for equipment and disability aids and also to Surrey County Council for support for carers;
 - Access to the Council's Handyperson service where appropriate;
 - Provision of minor works and major disabled adaptations, where feasible.
- Fairness and equality is promoted in decision making under this policy regarding the provision of adaptations in the homes of Council tenants, regardless of where the applicant lives, their background or circumstances;
- The help provided under this policy is accessible to those who needs it and awareness of this support is promoted through the Council's website and relevant publicity materials.

3 Statutory and Regulatory Framework

3.1 In devising this policy regard has been given to:

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

A long-term effect refers to impairments:

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

Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

The legislation which sets out the duty and rules for providing mandatory Disabled Facility Grants.

Home Standard

The Home Standard is one of a series of regulatory standards published by the Regulator of Social Housing that must be met by all registered providers of social housing, including local authorities. It requires providers to co-operate with relevant organisations to provide an adaptations service that meets tenants' needs.

The Council's Housing Allocation Scheme

This policy sets out the rules for how the Council allocates housing in the District.

4 Eligibility for Assistance

4.1 Who can apply

The provision of assistance under this policy will be considered for the following groups:

- Secure periodic or flexible tenants of Tandridge District Council who have successfully passed their probationary tenancy;
- A spouse or partner of a Council tenant (as defined above);
- A parent, sibling or child of a Council tenant (as defined above) living as part of the tenant's household;
- Households living in Council owned temporary accommodation for homeless households will only be granted assistance with minor adaptations.

4.2 The person who will benefit from the assistance provided under this policy must:

1. Permanently reside at the property as their only or principal residence (see 4.3 and 4.4 below), and;
2. Have an impairment which has a significant or serious long-term impact on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities in the home and/or access essential facilities in their home. The impairment of the disabled person must have lasted or be likely to last for at least

12 months, or be likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected.

- 4.3 Where major adaptations are required to meet the needs of a disabled person who has newly joined a household, in order to be considered as being permanently resident at the property they must first register as living there for Council Tax purposes and continue to do so for at least 12 months. If over the age of 18 and eligible to vote, they should also register on the electoral register at that address. They also must not own or have a tenancy of another property in their name.

In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible for the Council to grant an exception to this requirement under 11.7 of this policy.

- 4.4 Where the Council is rehousing a disabled person into an alternative property because it can be adapted to meet an identified need, there is no requirement to be resident in the new property for 12 months before adaptations can be installed. In these circumstances, works will be undertaken as soon as reasonably practical in the new property, subject to budget. This may mean that the adaptations are not completed before the disabled person moves in.

- 4.5 Sub tenants (or lodgers) living with a secure Council tenant in their home, will not usually be eligible for assistance under this policy and will be provided with housing advice to source their own housing. However, works may be considered in exceptional circumstances, providing the following applies:

- The lodger's occupation does not make the home overcrowded;
- The Council has given permission for the lodger to reside in the property;
- The secure tenant still resides there as their only or principal home;
- The lodger has resided at the property with the tenant for an extended amount of time (more than 12 months) and the lodger intends to continue to reside there for the next 5 years.

5.0 Assistance provided under this policy

- 5.1 There are three categories of assistance available under this policy.

- Referrals for equipment and disability aids and also support for carers;
- Minor Adaptations;
- Major Adaptations.

- 5.2 In all cases, the assistance offered under this policy will be the most cost-effective solution that will meet the need of the disabled person.

- 5.3 Where a tenant is being rehoused due to the redevelopment or refurbishment of their current home and they require adaptations, essential adaptations will only be installed only in the new home being offered. This will apply mostly to

the tenants of repurposed sheltered housing schemes which require refurbishment or redevelopment.

- 5.4 The Council is committed to maintenance programmes that improve accessibility as this should reduce the pressure on the Council's internal budget for adaptations. An example of this would be where the planned maintenance programmes for bathrooms in sheltered properties replaces baths with level access showers as required. The Council will seek to consider this in any re-procurement of appropriate contracts.

6.0 Equipment

- 6.1 The Council will use a preventative approach to enable Council tenants who do not meet the criteria for major or minor adaptations under this policy to remain in their homes by making referrals to Occupational Therapy for equipment, disabled aids and information on community facilities such as bathing. Referrals can also be made to Surrey County Council to obtain support for carers and advice on moving and handling.

The Council also recognises that the provision of equipment can also delay the need for more substantial adaptations.

- 6.2 Equipment can help with daily tasks such as:

- Reaching down to put on socks or shoes;
- Getting in and out of the bath;
- Getting up from a low toilet;
- Getting up out of an easy chair;
- Carrying things between rooms;
- Turning taps on and off.

- 6.3 Referrals for equipment are made to Surrey County Council Occupational Therapy who assess and recommend what equipment is required. In some circumstances, equipment may be loaned through the Community Equipment Service but there is a requirement for individuals to purchase small items of equipment themselves. Where equipment cannot be loaned, Social Services can assist applicants to seek charitable funding for equipment or provide advice on where equipment can be sourced privately.

- 6.4 Simple aids and adaptations can also be provided via the Council's Handyperson service, with some works such as grabrails and key safes provided free of charge to Council tenants, subject to budget. The Council will regularly review the provision of these works for free and reserves the right to withdraw or change this provision, subject to available budget.

7.0 Minor Adaptations

- 7.1 Minor adaptations are works that cost up to a maximum of £1000. A request for minor adaptations must be supported by a doctor or other medical professional, or an occupational therapist.
- 7.2 Minor adaptations will be considered on a case by case basis and where appropriate (and subject to budget), they will be provided at the earliest opportunity in all tenures (apart from probationary tenancies). There will be no requirement for the disabled person to be permanently resident in the property for 12 months to qualify for assistance with minor adaptations
- 7.3 The type of work classed as minor adaptations includes:
- Lever taps;
 - Internal and external grab rails;
 - Mop stick bannister rails;
 - Half steps;
 - Door alterations – re-hanging, widening, alternative handles or locks;
 - Small modular kit form ramps;
 - Other small items that can be fixed to the property structure, such as additional lighting or an extension bell or ringer, can be provided only to those whose sight or hearing is impaired and where there is no alternative to a permanent fixed installation;
 - Over bath showers will only be provided if there is a confirmed medical need that is supported by a medical practitioner.

8.0 Major Adaptations

- 8.1 Major adaptations are works which cost over £1,000 to a maximum of £30,000. Such works which are categorised by an Occupational Therapist as “Urgent” will be carried out as soon as possible, subject to budget availability.
- 8.2 Examples of major adaptations are:
- Kitchen fittings and adaptations;
 - Bathroom fittings and adaptations;
 - Other internal adaptations such as stairlifts;
 - Adaptations that facilitate access into and around the home;
 - Access into a garden or outside space;
 - An extension to provide accessible living/ bedroom/bathroom accommodation.

An extension will be considered only if remodelling the existing layout is not feasible or financially viable, where rehousing is not considered appropriate and it provides the most cost effective solution. It is Council policy to use prefabricated, ready for occupation, wheelchair accessible pods wherever possible rather than build an extension of traditional construction. Schemes

involving extensions often require planning permission and building regulation consent as well as a detailed feasibility study and specification. Tenants must be made aware that if a property has increased in size permanently, it may be subject to an increase in rental and council tax value.

- 8.3 Major adaptations will not be installed in temporary accommodation provided to homeless households. Housing legislation places the Council under a duty to ensure that any temporary accommodation provided is suitable for that household. Therefore, this duty prevents the Council from placing very disabled individuals in temporary accommodation over a longer time period.

9.0 Application and Assessment Process for assistance

9.1 Identifying the need for major adaptations

Before assistance can be considered under this policy, tenants must request a referral to an Occupational Therapist approved by Surrey County Council Social Services. The Occupational Therapist will assess the level of disability need, consider what works may be necessary and appropriate and send their recommendations to Tandridge District Council to process under this policy.

There is no right of review of the Occupational Therapist's decision to make recommendations or not, or what to include in the recommendations as they are based upon their professional opinion. However, if a disabled person is dissatisfied with the recommendations provided, they should discuss them further with the Occupational Therapist to see if any alternative solutions might be appropriate. Surrey County Council also operate a formal complaints process if the disabled person remains dissatisfied.

While the Council will consider the detail of the recommendations from the Occupational Therapist, the final decision as to whether the works are necessary and appropriate lies with the Council.

- 9.2 Adaptations works which qualify for funding under this policy are works designed to:

- Enable a disabled person to gain access to and from their home, including access to a garden;
- Make the dwelling safe for the disabled person and other occupants;
- Enable access to a room which is used as the "principle family room";
- Facilitate access to a room for sleeping;
- Enable access to a toilet, bathroom or shower room and enable the use of these facilities;
- Facilitate the preparation and cooking of food;
- Improve or provide a heating system to meet the needs of a disabled person;
- Facilitate the use of a source of power, light or heat by altering the existing means of control or providing additional ones;

- Enable a disabled person to have access and movement around the home to be able to care for someone else living there.
- 9.3 If the Occupational Therapy assessment identifies that the need for adaptations relates to a medical rather than functional condition, the Occupational Therapist (with permission from the disabled person) would request additional medical information from their GP or Consultant, if required, to support provision of major adaptation recommendations. The Council may refer such information to its own medical advisor.
- 9.4 A request for works funded under this policy is made by an Occupational Therapist sending their recommendations to the Community Surveyor at the Council responsible for providing adaptations in Council homes (no additional application form is required). The Community Surveyor will then consult with the Resident Support Lead Specialist and Resident Support Officer (Housing Management) who will undertake the appropriate checks on the tenancy and any housing register impacts.
- 9.5 On receipt of all relevant documentation (recommendations, tenancy and housing register information and additional medical information if needed) the Adaptations Panel, will jointly consider this information and reach a decision as to whether the works are both necessary and appropriate and also reasonable and practical in order to determine the overall suitability of the works before authorising.
- 9.6 When deciding a request for adaptations, the Council will consider all the factors set out below to ensure best use of resources in terms of public funds and housing stock, whilst meeting the needs of the disabled person:
- The characteristics of the dwelling which include: age, location, internal layout, type of construction, surrounding buildings and ground conditions;
 - Any planning or building regulation requirements;
 - The impact of the adaptation on the property's future use and lettable;

Where adaptations are requested to a flat above ground floor that is not served by a lift, consideration will be given to any additional works that are also likely to be necessary.

Any request made to remove a bath and install a level access shower/wet room in a flat above ground floor, will require an assessment to be made of the access, internal circulation space and staircases and whether the disabled person will be able to manage these areas safely in the short to medium term. The Council will consult with Occupational Therapy and other medical professionals to reach a decision regarding this. If it is established that the disabled person is likely to have access and mobility difficulties, suitable alternatives will be explored in consultation with the applicant/disabled person. This may include rehousing.

- The suitability of the property for the size of the household. In exceptional circumstances, the Council may consider installing adaptations where the household is under-occupying their property according to the “Property Size Eligibility” rules set out in the Council’s Allocation Scheme, which have been developed to enable the Council make best use of its housing stock. However, it is highly unlikely that consent would ever be given where the level of under-occupancy is in excess of more than one bedroom.
- Whether any other family member has a competing need that can only be met in that particular property;
- The availability of the household’s existing support network, including carers;
- The household’s long-term intentions regarding the use of the property;
- Whether it is likely that suitable alternative accommodation will become available within the social housing stock in the District in the next 12 months;
- Whether the installation of external adaptations in communal areas of flats would have a negative impact on other residents or would disable or compromise their safety. For example, ramping will not normally be provided in a communal area but where works are both essential and reasonably practical, the Council will risk assess requests on a case by case basis;
- The most cost-effective means of achieving the required outcome. The maximum spend on works under this policy is £30,000. In exceptional circumstances a recommendation can be made by the Council’s Adaptations Board to the Executive Head of Communities to exercise discretion and increase the spend over the £30,000 limit by a maximum of £10,000 (total maximum £40,000).

10.0 Discretion to increase funding for adaptation works

- 10.1 The Council meets the cost of providing adaptations from its own budget. In line with limits imposed upon mandatory Disabled Facility Grants, the maximum cost of adaptations that can be funded under this Policy for adaptations in Council homes is £30,000. It is recognised however, that there may be a very small number of exceptional cases where the maximum cost allowed under this policy may need to be exceeded. An example of this

would be where an extension is needed to create a fully accessible downstairs living area for the disabled person.

10.2 Recommendations to exercise discretion will be made via a short report composed by the Adaptations Board presented to the Executive Head of Communities. The Adaptations Board is coordinated by the Senior Resident Support Specialist (Housing Management) and comprises:

- Resident Support Lead Specialist
- Senior Resident Support Specialist (Housing Management)
- Community Surveyor

10.3 It will only be possible to recommend that discretion is exercised to increase spend by maximum of an additional £10,000, subject to available budget and where all the following criteria have been met:

- Suitable alternative housing is not available in the existing social housing stock (suitability also includes the affordability of accommodation);
- Where alternative funding cannot be identified from Surrey County Council's discretionary funding or from other charitable organisations.
- Where discussions with the Occupational Therapist to find an alternative way to meet the need they have identified have been exhausted and it is not possible to reduce the scheme and meet the identified need another way.

10.4 As the decision to extend the spend limit by a maximum of £10,000 is discretionary, there is no right of review of this decision.

11.0 Examples of where assistance may not be granted.

11.1 Requests for assistance are considered on an individual basis and the tenant will be advised in writing by the Senior Resident Support Specialist (Housing Management) should the request be refused. The letter setting out the reasons why the entitlement to make an application has been refused will also contain details of the Council's formal complaints policy.

11.2 Examples of where a request for works may not be granted include (not exhaustive list):

- Where a tenant is exercising their Right to Buy.
- If a tenant is completing a Right to Buy application, it should be noted that the sale and value of the property will be affected if major adaptations have already been completed.

Neither will the Council fund adaptations for tenants who have applied for an Assisted Purchase Scheme payment to move into a privately-owned home.

Tenants who are purchasing a home can be considered under the Council's mandatory Disabled Facility Grant policy, which enables those who intend to acquire an interest in a property to apply for a mandatory grant. No grant monies will be paid under the Council's mandatory policy DFG until the sale has completed.

- Where the tenancy of the Council property is to be terminated due to rent arrears or where there is a threat of an eviction or where the tenancy will not or is likely to not continue beyond a six-month period after the referral has been received from the Occupational Therapist. This is to ensure that adaptations are not carried out at a property where the tenant will be moving out. If the tenant is moving out into private accommodation, they will still be able to apply for a Disabled Facility Grant through the Council's mandatory policy.

Tenants who have breached their tenancy agreement due to anti-social behaviour and those known to Resident Support Services for causing nuisance in their neighbourhood, will not be considered under this policy unless an Acceptable Behaviour Agreement (ABA) is signed and complied with for at least a six-month period following receipt by the Council of recommendations from the Occupational Therapist;

Where tenants have rent arrears, the expectation is that they will clear the arrears in full before works can go forward. Where there are large amounts of arrears the Adaptations Panel has discretion to agree works where the tenant has entered into a repayment arrangement and has kept to this agreement for a reasonable period of time, usually, six months and there is the expectation that the tenancy will continue ongoing.

There may be a very small number of exceptional cases where it is appropriate to do the works despite arrears. In these circumstances an exception to this requirement can be agreed by the Executive Head of Communities (see 11.7).

- Where the tenant of the Council property has applied for a transfer to an alternative home;
- Where the Council property is overcrowded. Where a referral is for additional space, for example an extra bedroom, this will not be considered a valid adaptation under this policy on the grounds of social overcrowding. This will be deemed an issue that can be resolved via the

Housing Register and will be referred to the Resident Support Case Team to help the tenant find a property to meet that need. Funding for disabled adaptations cannot be spent to fund social overcrowding where a move to a larger property would be the best solution.

- The Council will not approve an adaptation request for the installation of a stairlift in a communal area in a block of flats. This is due to the risk of an impeded exit, not only to the disabled person but other users of the building. Emergency services will also require an unobstructed access in the event of an emergency. Where a disabled person qualifies for assistance under this policy, the Council will consult with Occupational Therapy and other medical professionals to reach a decision regarding their ability to access the property in case their needs are better met by a move to another property on the ground floor.
- Where the request for assistance is for a person with no recourse to public funds in the United Kingdom under Section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Requests for major adaptations will not be agreed where the disabled person is awaiting medical procedures which will improve their mobility.

The eligibility criteria for this policy is that the person must have an impairment which has a significant or serious long-term impact and must have lasted or be anticipated to last 12 months or more. (see 4.2, 2).

Temporary or minor adaptations only will be considered in these circumstances in the interim period until the surgery or procedure can be completed and the extent of recovery known.

- Where adaptation works are required for a disabled child and the parents are separated, adaptations will not usually be provided in two properties. Works will only be undertaken at the child's principal residence; this is usually the residence of the parent who is in receipt of child benefit.
- It is Council policy not to provide storage, ramping or charging points for mobility scooters. This should be taken into account before one is purchased. The Council operates a Mobility Scooter Policy which is applied to all Council housing and can be provided on request.
- Where a tenant requests a mutual exchange or transfer from their adapted property to one not suitably adapted, the Council will not carry out further adaptations unless there are extenuating circumstances. The Council will take account of the reasons for the move and work with the tenant to consider the option that best meets the long term needs and requirements of the tenant and their family.

If the tenant already occupies an adapted home, permission to exchange may be refused if nobody in the new tenant's household requires the adaptations in place.

- The Council appreciates that where a child has challenging behaviour because of their disability it can cause difficulties and put additional strain on the family environment. Sometimes in these instances additional space or specialist facilities and equipment are needed to alleviate the strain on the family.

If a child is unable to share a bedroom with siblings due to a medical condition that affects their behaviour, but there is adequate additional space in the property, it is not reasonable or practical for the Council to provide additional space or equipment under this policy.

For other referrals relating to behaviour, the Council will work with occupational therapists to consider the best solution and only carry out an adaptation where there is an assessed need and identified risks, and then only when all alternative options have been fully explored.

- 11.3 Where a tenant has been refused works under this policy, they have a right to apply for a Disabled Facility Grant or they may apply for funding through a charity or armed forces association, or self-fund works themselves. In all cases where works are funded by other means outside this policy, the Council's permission will be required before works commence and will only be agreed if the option is reasonable and meets the tenant's needs (see section: Tenants Installing Their Own Adaptations). Please note, that some adaptations may impact on the welfare benefit entitlement of the tenant, for example, increasing the size of the property may result in the tenant becoming subject to an under-occupancy charge or bedroom subsidy (also known as the bedroom tax).
- 11.4 Consideration will also be given on a case by case basis to requesting that the tenant transfer to a more suitable property. This request will be made in consultation with the tenant/disabled person to assess the impact of moving on the disabled persons health, condition and individual circumstances to ensure that it will not have a serious adverse effect on them. The Council will be sensitive to people who have lived in their homes for a long time, to ensure that moving is in their best interests and support their long-term needs, well-being and continuity of care.
- 11.6 Any tenant who wishes to downsize and release a property suitable for a family will be given priority for a transfer and financial assistance with the costs of moving in accordance with the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme and Transfer Incentive Scheme payments. Any incentive payment granted

may be used to offset rent arrears or other outstanding debts related to the property before releasing any remaining balance onto the tenant.

- 11.7 The Council recognises that there may be occasions where a request for adaptations falls outside this policy. These cases will be considered on an individual basis by the Adaptations Panel who will provide their recommendations in a report presented to the Executive Head of Communities. An exception to this policy may be agreed by the Executive Head of Communities, where appropriate and reasonable to do so.

12.0 Timescales

- 12.1 The Council aims to deal with all cases as quickly as reasonably practical, subject to demand and budget availability and aims to ensure that no tenant waits longer than 12 months for an adaptation.
- 12.2 Cases will be placed on a waiting list in the order of the date recommendations are received from Social Services. Works will be carried out in strict date order, except for recommendations that the Occupational Therapist categorises as “Urgent”. Urgent works will be carried out as quickly as possible, subject to budget.

13.0 Means Test

- 13.1 The Council has decided not to apply a means test to tenants (or to the disabled person where they are not the tenant) for adaptation works in Council homes where the tenant or disabled person is in receipt of a means tested benefit. Where a means tested benefit is in payment no financial contribution is required towards the costs of minor and major adaptations.
- 13.2 Any request for adaptations for a child will not be subject to any means test and no financial contribution is required towards the costs of minor and major adaptations.
- 13.3 Where the tenant (or the disabled person if they are not a tenant) is in not in receipt of a means tested benefit, the same means test applied to mandatory disabled facility grants will be applied. Where a financial contribution towards works has been identified, this must be paid in full before the adaptations will be installed.
- 13.4 The Council recognises that households who are not in receipt of means tested benefits but whose income is just over the threshold for benefit entitlement, will not receive any additional financial support from another source and this can put a strain on saving for a financial contribution. To alleviate any risk of financial hardship for those just over the benefit threshold who do not receive a means tested benefit, the Council will write off any financial contribution below £1000. This is in line with the Council’s mandatory disabled facility grant policy.

14 Tenants Installing Their Own Adaptations

- 14.1 The Council wants to encourage tenants to respect their homes and keep them in a suitable condition and recognises that in some cases, tenants may choose to carry out adaptations that are over and above what they need, with a specification of finish that the Council cannot fund from the public purse.
- 14.2 Secure periodic tenants have the right to request permission to make such improvements to their property which the Council cannot unreasonably refuse. S 97 (1) Housing Act 1985 sets out that tenants must obtain written permission from their Council landlord before carrying out any alternations to the property they rent.
- 14.3 Tenants who hold a flexible tenancy do not have the same right to carry out improvements as a secure periodic tenant, but the Council may still consider granting permission for the installation of adaptations privately, provided the request for permission is made before works starts.
- 14.4 In all cases, the tenant is responsible for obtaining any necessary planning permission or building consents.
- 14.5 Tenants are required to provide a written request to the Council setting out the detail of the works, confirming who will carry them out, and depending upon the scale and nature of the works, tenants will need to submit a financial statement demonstrating that the tenant can fund the works and also meet their rent obligations.
- 14.6 In general, it is the Council's policy not to remove adaptations and to make every effort to let adapted properties to applicants who need them. However, dependant on the nature of the works, the Council reserves the right to stipulate that the adaptation must be removed at the end of the tenancy and any damage to the property made good, otherwise the Council will have to undertake this work on behalf of the former tenant who will then be recharged the cost.
- 14.7 The Council does not guarantee to take over any adaptations installed without the Council's consent and may require the tenant to remove them and make good the damage to the property when they move out. Should the tenant fail to remove the adaptations at the end of their tenancy and the Council have to make good any damage to the property, the former tenant will be liable for the cost of this. Any debt owed to the Council will impact on any reapplication they may make to the Council for housing in future.
- 14.8 The tenant may be responsible for the maintenance and repair of any adaptations they install themselves and generally, the Council will not be liable for any damage or injury caused by adaptations not installed by them.
- 14.9 Tenants are permitted to carry out some improvement works to their homes themselves provided the Council is satisfied as to their level of competency. It

is at the discretion of The Council whether they will permit tenants to undertake their own adaptation works or insist that they hire independent contractors, depending of the size of the adaptations and experience of the tenant. In some instances, the Council will insist that a contractor, with relevant insurances, undertake the work because the risk of injury to persons or property may be too high and the applicant could not cover the risk themselves.

14.10 Written consent to proceed must be given by the Council before works can commence and the Council may inspect works on completion to ensure they have been carried out satisfactorily. Where works have not been carried out satisfactorily, the Council will serve notice on the tenant setting out what is required, either to remove the works or to bring them up to the required standard. Failure to comply will result in the Council undertaking the required work and recharging the tenant.

14.11 At the end of a secure tenancy, tenants who have carried out adaptations at their own expense and with the permission of the Council may be eligible for compensation as set out in Part IV, s 99A Housing Act 1985. The Council has developed a guide for tenants entitled to compensation which can be provided on request. Tenants who hold a flexible tenancy are not entitled to any compensation for improvements made to the property when their tenancy comes to an end (s.155(3) and (4) Localism Act 2011).

14.12 It is not possible to give consent for tenants to do their own works in all cases but refusal to give permission would only be decided with good reason.

Reasons for refusal include:

- The works would negatively affect any maintenance to the property;
- The works would breach regulatory requirements;
- The works would pose a potential health and safety risk;
- The financial assessment of the works means that the tenant cannot fund the works and meet their rental obligations;
- Where the tenancy of the Council property is to be terminated due to rent arrears or where there is a threat of an eviction or where the tenancy will not or is likely to not continue beyond a six-month period after the request to install private adaptations has been received. This is to ensure that works are not carried out at a property where the tenant will be moving out. If the tenant is moving out into private accommodation, they will still be able to apply for a Disabled Facility Grant through the Council's mandatory policy.

Tenants who have breached their tenancy agreement due to anti-social behaviour and those known to Resident Support Services for causing nuisance in their neighbourhood, will not be considered unless an ABA is signed and complied with for at least a six-month period;

- The likely disruption to neighbours and local residents during and after works are carried out;
- The Council is not satisfied as to the tenant's competency to undertake the proposed works or is not satisfied with the competency of the proposed contractor to undertake the works;
- The tenant has registered an application on the Council's Housing Register for a transfer;

15.0 Equality and Diversity

- 15.1 Through the management of this policy the Council aims to treat all tenants fairly, and with respect and professionalism regardless of their gender, race age, disability, religion, sexual orientation and/or marital status.
- 15.2 To enable all tenants to have clear information and equal access to our services, the Council will, on request, publish this policy in a range of languages and formats and through a range of media, where appropriate.
- 15.3 Where there is a barrier to accessing information about this service, extra effort will be made by The Council and its representatives to ensure the tenant understands the process. This may involve asking a relative or third party for help or employing translation or interpretation services if necessary.

16.0 Complaints

- 16.1 Where a person is dissatisfied either with an aspect of this policy, how it has been implemented or the level of service they have received under the policy, they will have the right to complain.
- 16.2 Issues or concerns should be raised informally in the first instance and the Council given an opportunity to consider the facts of the situation and find the right solution, as quickly as possible.
- 16.3 Where it has not been possible to resolve matters informally, complaints will be considered under the Council's formal, two stage, complaints policy. The details of the Council's complaints policy will be provided on request or when it is considered that this information will be of assistance to that person. Details of how to make a complaint will also be included in any correspondence setting out decisions made under this policy, as well as in

any publicity and information literature used to inform people about the service.

- 16.4 Once the Council's formal complaints process has been exhausted, the Housing Ombudsman can be approached to review and investigate complaints about this policy.
- 16.2 The Council recognises that vulnerable people may need additional support raising concerns informally or when making a complaint under this policy and will also signpost people to the support available locally through groups such as Citizens Advice or Tandridge Access Group.

17.0 Policy Monitoring and Review

- 17.1 This policy will be reviewed by officers six months and 12 months from adoption and after that, every three years to ensure that an effective, high quality service is being provided that both follows best practice and meets tenants' requirements. The policy will also be reviewed when any legislative changes occur, or if the policy is deemed to be unfit for purpose and/or no longer reflects the changing needs of tenants.
- 17.2 Monitoring of performance and satisfaction with the provision of adaptations under this policy will be used to inform future policy development and will consider whether:
- The policy adheres to legislative and regulatory requirements;
 - The aims of the policy are being met and these aims continue to meet the needs of and requirements of our tenants;
 - Service users are aware and understand the policy and believe it to be fair and consistent;
 - The service offers value for money.
- 17.3 Measures of satisfaction with the service will be monitored through customer satisfaction surveys and post inspections of work to ensure the Council meets performance standards.
- 17.4 Any review of this policy will be undertaken in consultation with staff, other relevant partners and stakeholders and tenant groups to promote tenant empowerment and involvement.

19.11.20