

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet Housing Committee – 29 July 2026

Aids & Adaptations Policy

Accountable member:

Cllr Flo Clucas, Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services

Accountable officer:

Claire Hughes, Director of Governance, Housing and Communities

Helen McEgan, Operations Manager – Technical & Investment

Executive summary:

The Aids and Adaptations Policy is in line with legislative requirements and provides clarity and guidance to both applicants and the council when assessing requests for disabled adaptations from council housing tenants and leaseholders (if the adaptation is required in a communal area). The policy will enable the council to provide a fair and consistent approach to these requests and will ensure the most effective use of the council's housing stock and limited capital budget.

The policy was approved by the committee as a consultation draft on 1st April 2026 and following consultation with key stakeholders a number of amendments and clarifications have been made.

If approved by the Cabinet Housing Committee, the policy will be presented to Cabinet for approval in September and once approved it will be published on the Council's website and an accessible version produced. The author will work with the council's communications team to promote the publication of the policy and raise awareness of it so that vulnerable tenants can access the support if needed.

Recommendations:

1. The Cabinet Housing Committee recommends that Cabinet approves the Aids and Adaptations Policy attached at Appendix 5.
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1. Background

- 1.1. The Aids and Adaptations Policy ("the policy") seeks to inform tenants (and in certain cases, leaseholders) of how to request aids and adaptations in council owned housing, as well as the process that the council will follow when adapting council-owned homes to meet specific needs. The policy does not apply to residents living in private rented, owner occupied or

housing association properties.

- 1.2. The policy was presented to the Housing Cabinet Committee on 1st April 2026 as a draft for approval to consult. Consultation has now taken place with key stakeholders including the Accessibility Forum and the Tenant's Panel. Changes to the final version of the policy are shown below.

2. Main content

- 2.1. Changes made to the final version of the policy are set out below and highlighted in yellow in the policy itself.
- 2.2. Where possible, the council will use this policy to enable tenants to remain both safe and independent in their own home to support positive health and wellbeing outcomes. However, in certain circumstances, alternative housing options will be explored to try and meet tenant's needs. The policy gives examples of when a property may not be deemed suitable for adaptation. Additional text has also been added in the Equalities Statement section of the policy.
- 2.3. Following feedback from the Accessibility Forum the flowchart on appendix 1 within the policy has been simplified.
- 2.4. A reference to when leaseholders can apply for assistance under the policy has been added, clarifying that if the work is needed in the communal area of a block of flats it will be addressed under this policy and not the Housing Assistance Policy.
- 2.5. The discretionary funding section has been updated to mirror the Housing Assistance Policy, ensuring a fully harmonised approach across all housing tenures. Reference has also been added to the process which will be followed for exceptional decisions not covered within the policy.
- 2.6. The legislative and local context has been updated.
- 2.7. A section on removal of aids and adaptations has been added.
- 2.8. An equalities impact assessment has been completed and this has shown that the policy will have a positive impact on older and disabled people including children.
- 2.9. Internal processes have also been developed and a simple guide for staff is attached at Appendix 3 of this report.
- 2.10. An 'easy read' version of the policy will be produced and an example of what this could look like is attached at Appendix 4 of this report. The final version will be produced by the council's communications team.

3. Key risks

- 3.1. The risk of not having a policy in place is high as it can lead to inconsistently applied decision making. This in turn could lead to increased complaints and ombudsman cases and wasted resources in terms of both budgets and property being mismanaged.

Report author:

Helen McEgan, Operations Manager, Technical & Investment

Helen.mcegan@cheltenham.gov.uk

Appendices:

- i. Risk Assessment
- ii. Equality Impact Assessment
- iii. Procedure guide for staff
- iv. Easy Read Version
- v. Aids and Adaptations Policy, 29th July 2026

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
1.	No policy in place leading to inconsistent decision making, increased customer dissatisfaction and wasted resources (property and budget)	Operations Manager T&I	5	1	5	Avoid the risk	Produce a policy and keep it under review	Operations Manager T&I	29 th July 2026
2.	Risk that demand for the service exceeds the available budget.	Operations Manager T&I	5	3	15	Implement strong budget monitoring	Adaptations are a statutory service and therefore budgets will need to be cut elsewhere to meet demand.	Operations Manager T&I and Finance	Ongoing

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

Introduction

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is a method for assessing the effects or impacts of a council policy or function on removing barriers to equality.

The Equality Act 2010 includes a public sector equality duty which requires public authorities to try and eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it and promote equality and good relations across a range of protected characteristics.

The protected characteristics are:

Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment
Marriage and civil partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Race
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)	Sex	Sexual orientation

An EqIA should be completed with the full range of protected characteristics considered during the initial stages of developing new strategies, policies, functions or services, prior to starting a procurement exercise and before decisions are made.

Examples of when an EqIA should be completed are:

Any proposals to introduce or add to a service	Any proposals to adopt policy priorities, strategies and plans
Any proposals to remove, reduce or alter a service	Changes to staffing structure where groups of employees are likely to be negatively affected
Any new policies or changes to policies	Any proposals in relation to procured or commissioned services

Stage 1 - Equality Screening

Whenever a policy/service or function is reviewed, changed, developed or removed an initial equality impact assessment stage 1 will need to be undertaken. This is a screening template and will help establish whether a full assessment is needed. This should be done at an early stage of the process so that it is part of policy development.

Stage 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

This is the full EqlA and seeks to identify the equality considerations that have been taken into account including any mitigating actions proposed and ensures decisions are based on evidence. The EqlA will need to be agreed with the appropriate Head of Service or Director and should be included on the decision making report, along with commentary on the assessment in the main body of the report.

STAGE 1 – Equality Screening

1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

a. Person responsible for this EqlA

Officer responsible: Helen McEgan

Service Area: Housing Services

Title: Operations Manager – Technical & Investment

Date of assessment: 9.7.26

Signature: *Helen McEgan*

b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Policy

If other, please specify:

c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Aids and Adaptations Policy

Is this new or existing?

New or proposed

Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Since Cheltenham Borough Homes housing stock came back into the Council, new policies are required to align with Cheltenham Borough Council processes and procedures.

d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	The policy sets out how the council will support disabled tenants and in certain conditions, leaseholders, and meet its statutory obligations for the provision of adaptations, as landlord of the property.
Objectives:	To enable tenants, and in certain conditions, leaseholders, to remain both safe and independent in their own home to support positive health and wellbeing outcomes.
Outcomes:	Supporting the council's most vulnerable tenants to maintain their health, wellbeing and quality of life outcomes as well as sustaining tenancies and creating sustainable communities.
Benefits:	Disabled tenants and in certain conditions, leaseholders, will be able to apply for assistance to have their home environment adapted or specialist equipment provided, to help them maintain their independence and manage their health conditions.

e. What are the expected impacts?	
Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.	Yes
Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?	Positive
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	
Older people and those with disabilities will be able to apply for assistance to have their home environment adapted or specialist equipment provided, to help them maintain their independence and manage their health conditions.	

If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.

f. Identify next steps as appropriate	
Stage Two required	Yes
Owner of Stage Two assessment	Helen McEgan
Completion date for Stage Two assessment	9/7/26

Please forward this completed form to [add email address] and move on to Stage 2 if required.

STAGE 2 – Full Equality Impact Assessment

2. Engagement and consultation

The best approach to find out if a policy etc, is likely to impact positively or negatively on equality groups is to look at existing research, previous consultation recommendations, studies or consult with representatives of those equality groups.

a. Research and evidence
List below any data, consultations (previous, relevant, or future planned), or any relevant research, studies or analysis that you have considered to assess the policy, function, strategy, service change or project for its relevance to equality.
A draft version of the Aids and Adaptations Policy was presented to the Housing Cabinet Committee on 1 st April 2026. This was approved to go out for consultation with relevant stakeholders.

b. Consultation	
Has any consultation be conducted?	Yes
Describe the consultation or engagement you have conducted or are intending to conduct. Describe who was consulted, what the outcome of the activity was and how these results have influenced the development of the strategy, policy, project, service change or budget option. If no consultation or engagement is planned, please explain why.	
As part of the policy development, I have worked with the Specialist Housing Occupational Therapist, Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust and he has provided feedback. I also attended the Accessibility Forum on 4.6.26 and the Tenant Panel on 17.4.26 where minor amendments were suggested and incorporated into the final version. An article has also gone into the Tenant's Newsletter, and a follow up feature article will be produced once the final policy is approved to raise awareness of it amongst tenants and leaseholders.	

3. Assessment

a. Assessment of impacts

For each characteristic, please indicate the type of impact (positive – contributes to promoting equality or improving relations within an equality group, neutral – no impact, negative – could disadvantage them).

Please use the description of impact box to explain how you justify the impact and include any data and evidence that you have collected from surveys, performance data or complaints to support your proposed changes

Protected Characteristic	Specific Characteristic	Impact	Description of impact	Mitigating Action
AGE	Older people (60+)	Positive	Adaptations in the home can help people to live independently as they age or if they have a disability.	N/A
	Younger People (16-25)	Positive	Adaptations in the home can help people to live independently as they age or if they have a disability.	N/A
	Children (0-16)	Positive	Adaptations in the home can help people to live independently as they age or if they have a disability.	N/A
DISABILITY A definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 is available here . <i>See also carer responsibilities under other considerations.</i>	Physical disability	Positive	Adaptations in the home can help people to live independently as they age or if they have a disability.	N/A
	Sensory Impairment (sight, hearing)	Positive	Adaptations in the home can help people to live independently as they age or if they have a disability.	N/A
	Mental health	Positive	Adaptations in the home can help people to live	N/A

			independently as they age or if they have a disability.	
	Learning Disability	Positive	Adaptations in the home can help people to live independently as they age or if they have a disability.	N/A
GENDER REASSIGNMENT		Neutral	No impact	N/A
MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	Women	Neutral	No impact	N/A
	Men	Neutral	No impact	N/A
	Lesbians	Neutral	No impact	N/A
	Gay Men	Neutral	No impact	N/A
PREGNANCY & MATERNITY	Women	Neutral	No impact	N/A

RACE* Further information on the breakdown below each of these headings, is available here . For example Asian, includes Chinese, Pakistani and Indian etc	White	Neutral	No impact	N/A
	Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	Neutral	No impact	N/A
	Asian	Neutral	No impact	N/A
	African	Neutral	No impact	N/A
	Caribbean or Black	Neutral	No impact	N/A
		Neutral	No impact	N/A
RELIGION & BELIEF** A list of religions used in the census is available here	See note	Neutral	No impact	N/A
SEX (GENDER)	Men	Neutral	No impact	N/A

	Women	Neutral	No impact	N/A
	Trans Men	Neutral	No impact	N/A
	Trans Women	Neutral	No impact	N/A
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	Heterosexual	Neutral	No impact	N/A
	Lesbian	Neutral	No impact	N/A
	Gay	Neutral	No impact	N/A
	Bisexual/Pansexual	Neutral	No impact	N/A
Other considerations				
Socio-economic factors (income, education, employment, community safety & social support)		Neutral	No impact	N/A

Rurality i.e. access to services; transport; education; employment; broadband		Neutral	No impact	N/A
Other (e.g. caring responsibilities)		Positive	No impact	N/A

* To keep the form concise, race has not been included as an exhaustive list, please augment the list above where appropriate to reflect the complexity of other racial identities.

** There are too many faith groups to provide a list, therefore, please input the faith group e.g. Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Hindus, etc. Consider the different faith groups individually when considering positive or negative impacts. A list of religions in the census is available [here](#)

4. Outcomes, Action and Public Reporting

a. Please list the actions identified through the evidence and the mitigating action to be taken.

Action	Target completion date	Lead Officer
Promote the final Aids a& Adaptations policy in the tenant's newsletter and social media campaign to raise awareness of the service.	31/12/26	Helen McEgan

b. Public reporting

All completed EqIA's are required to be publicly available on the Council's website once they have been signed off. EqIA's are also published with the papers for committee and full council decisions.

Please send completed EqIA's to [email address]

5. Monitoring outcomes, evaluation and review

The Equalities Impact Assessment is not an end in itself but the start of a continuous monitoring and review process. The relevant Service or Lead Officer responsible for the delivery of the policy, function or service change is also responsible for monitoring and reviewing the EqIA and any actions that may be taken to mitigate impacts.

Individual services are responsible for conducting the impact assessment for their area, staff from Corporate Policy and Governance will be available to provide support and guidance, please email xxxx if you have any questions.

6. Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change

Appendix 3: Procedure guide for staff

Advice regarding requests for aids and adaptations to council properties

Major adaptations over £2,000

These include:

- Level access showers
- Stairlifts
- Ground floor extensions
- Door widening
- Through floor lifts
- Kitchen adaptations
- Automated door opening system
- Wash/dry toilet

Minor adaptations below £2,000

These include:

- Grab rails
- Lever taps
- Ramps

All applications for major adaptations in council properties estimated at over £2,000, will only be considered when a referral is made by an Occupational Therapist (OT). The first step is for the disabled person to contact Social Services at Gloucestershire County Council and request an OT assessment. Their contact details are:

Email: socialcare.enq@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Phone: 01452 426 868

Once the assessment has taken place, the OT will email the referral to disabled.facilities@cheltenham.gov.uk. The Adaptations Coordinator will then input the information onto the relevant database and forward the referral to the appropriate team.

The Adaptations Coordinator, Michelle James, is the single point of contact for all queries regarding adaptations to council properties and **NOT** Technical Services or Repairs.

Email: disabled.facilities@cheltenham.gov.uk

Phone: 07920 692 524

REFERRALS FROM A DOCTOR OR GP SURGERY WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Appendix 4: ‘Easy Read’ version of the Aids and Adaptations Policy

Making Your Home Easier to Live In

Cheltenham Borough Council – Aids and Adaptations Service

What We Do

We help tenants who find things hard at home because of illness or disability. We can make small or big changes so you can stay safe and independent.

Types of Help

Small Changes	Big Changes
Grab rails, handrails, lever taps, small steps	Stairlifts, level-access showers, ramps, wider doors, wheelchair access
Usually free of charge	May need a financial check
Done by Repairs Team	Done with help from an Occupational Therapist

How to Ask for Help

- **Small changes:** Call **0800 4080000** or email **housing@cheltenham.gov.uk**
- **Big changes:** Call Gloucestershire County Council
 - Adults: **01452 426868**
 - Children: **01452 426565**

Paying for Work

- Small changes are **free**
- Big changes may need a **means test**
- If you get certain benefits, you may not have to pay

When the Council Might Say “No”

We may not do work if:

- The home can’t be adapted safely
- You plan to move soon

- You have a **Right to Buy** application
- The home is too big or too small for your family

We'll help you look at **moving options** if needed.

After the Work

- Big changes have a **12-month warranty**
- The council will look after repairs and servicing
- Adapted homes stay adapted for future tenants

Need Help or Have a Complaint?

You can contact us by phone, email, or in person. We'll listen and try to fix any problems quickly.