



City of
Doncaster
Council

Accessible Housing Register Policy 2023

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Scope	4
3. Aims of the Policy	4
4. Purpose of the Doncaster Accessible Housing Register	5
5. Principles of the Doncaster Accessible Housing Register	5
6. Assessment	6
7. Eligibility Criteria/ Accessible Housing Register Process.....	8
8. Priority banding.....	9
9. Appeals procedure	10
10. Bidding and Reviews	10
11. Matching Properties	11
12. Nominations	11
13 Adaptations	12
14 Refusals and Penalties.....	12
Glossary of Terms.....	13

1. Introduction

Appropriate housing is crucial in helping people who have difficulty accessing their environments to be more independent, safe, and well.

For some people and their unpaid carers, environmental barriers in the home can have a negative impact on both physical and mental health and lead to other disadvantages in life such as a lack of employment opportunities, reduced community engagement and financial hardship.

Providing suitable accessible homes enables people to go about their daily life safely and more independently with greater choice and control over their lives.

The main aim of the City of Doncaster's Accessible Housing Register (Accessible Housing Register) is to assist people needing more accessible environments to be matched to an adapted home that will be best suited to meet their needs.

The policy allows those with identified needs to apply for appropriate housing and where required access to a functional assessment to identify any more specialist requirements. This is solely for the purpose of allocating significantly adapted properties. All applications for other social housing properties will be made through St Leger Homes Doncaster Home Choice or by contacting Housing Associations direct.

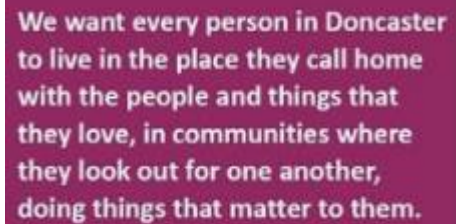
As demand for adapted properties continues to increase this policy sets out how we aim to support people requiring an adapted home at the earliest opportunity

Definition of an Adapted Property

1.1 For the purpose of this policy, the following definition will apply to the term 'Adapted Property'

An adapted property is one that contains two or more of the following key features:

- ✓ Stair Lift
- ✓ Ceiling track hoists
- ✓ Vertical Lift
- ✓ Step Lift
- ✓ Widened doors
- ✓ Significant ramping or Level access to two or more access point
- ✓ Level access shower or wet room
- ✓ Specialist wash dry toilet
- ✓ Environmental controls e.g. temperature sensors, curtain closers and door openers



We want every person in Doncaster to live in the place they call home with the people and things that they love, in communities where they look out for one another, doing things that matter to them.

Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Doncaster Council

www.doncaster.gov.uk

- ✓ Kitchen units – with significant adaptations, for example, lowering or raising work surfaces, variable height surfaces, installation of sinks surfaces with space beneath for use from a wheelchair
- ✓ Ground floor living where a parlour room can be used as a bedroom (minimum space standards) and be fit for purpose
- ✓ Wheelchair accessible properties
- ✓ Car Port – purpose built
- ✓ Purpose built Disabled persons bungalows

This is a list of examples but is not exhaustive

If a property has any of the following features but not two of the above it is not defined as an adapted property:

- ✓ Grab rails
- ✓ Handrails
- ✓ Stair rails
- ✓ Cubicle or step in or Easy Access Shower
- ✓ Ramping to entrance that doesn't comply to current standards, with no level platform, including wooden ramps
- ✓ Raised sockets
- ✓ Lowered light switches
- ✓ Level access Living Accessible (via a Lift)
- ✓ Ground floor living (e.g. bungalow, ground floor flat, flat with lift access)
- ✓ Off street parking

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy outlines the purpose, process, criteria and controls of the Doncaster Accessible Housing Register.
- 2.2 It applies to the City of Doncaster Council and those implementing and assessing applicants in conjunction with St Leger Homes of Doncaster who manage homes on behalf of the City of Doncaster Council.

3. Aims of the Policy

This document sets out a clear framework that provides guidance regarding the application and assessment process to identify needs sooner, and to find suitable living accommodation.

This enables people to live a fulfilled life in a suitably accessible property which promotes their safety and independence.

The policy sets out to:

- Provide continuity through consistent referral and assessment procedures

- Clarify the eligibility criteria for accessible housing

4. Purpose of the Doncaster Accessible Housing Register

4.1 The Doncaster Accessible Housing Register purpose is to;

- Reduce delays in discharges from hospital where applicants are unable to return to their previous accommodation.
- Avoid unnecessary spend on adaptations, for example, where adapting a property is not a suitable long-term solution for the housing needs of the applicant.
- Support people to retain choice and control over where they choose to live, for example where people have local support networks, whilst supporting people to make informed decisions based on housing stock.
- Predict future housing demand for adapted properties and accessible homes to inform related strategies and development plans.

5. Principles of the Doncaster Accessible Housing Register

- 5.1 In order to be considered for accessible housing the applicant must be registered with Doncaster Home Choice, the choice-based lettings system operated by St Leger Homes of Doncaster at www.stlegerhomes.co.uk.
- 5.2 Following receipt of the application for housing and request for an assessment for an accessible property, the applicant is sent a medical self-assessment form to complete and return to St Leger Homes of Doncaster.
- 5.3 A medical self-assessment is not required when an applicant is allocated an Occupational Therapist through circumstances such as they are in hospital, or living outside the City of Doncaster. If the applicant's health professional has identified the need to be rehoused they will need to identify what the persons requirements are including:
- ✓ The applicant's medical conditions and medication
 - ✓ The type of property they currently reside in and difficulties experienced in that property
 - ✓ The type of property and adaptations required to meet their assessed medical needs

- ✓ Whether the person would be happy to stay in their own home if it was possible to adapt it.

5.4 The completed self-assessment form identifies:

- Whether the person would be happy to stay in their own home if it was possible to adapt it.
- Provide a copy of a GP patient summary (Which is available free of charge) evidencing the applicant's medical conditions, medication, diagnosed conditions and any ongoing investigations.
- The type of property they currently reside in and difficulties experienced in that property.

5.5 Should the information provided suggest that the applicant has difficulty accessing facilities within their current home.

- ✓ The applicant will be asked to provide further evidence from a health professional if required.
- ✓ The applicant may be asked to attend one of our Clinics, or may be prescribed aids and adaptations through City of Doncaster Council, or St Leger Housing Occupational Therapy services.
- ✓ Where the applicant is an existing Doncaster Council tenant they may be assessed by an Occupational Therapist from St Leger Homes of Doncaster who may conduct a full functional assessment dependent on the evidence provided.
- ✓ Where the applicant is not a Doncaster Council tenant they may be assessed by an Occupational Therapist from Doncaster Council who may conduct a full functional assessment dependent on the evidence provided.
- ✓ Assessments could be by telephone, liaison with other professionals, clinic appointment or a home visit.

5.6 Accessible housing may not always be the best solution for young children with disabilities as an adapted environment may further disable a child by limiting their opportunities to learn the skills to overcome environmental barriers and meet certain developmental milestones and life skills. However there are circumstances in which accessible housing is deemed to be the most appropriate solution for a child with disabilities. Individual circumstances will be assessed, taking in to account the current and future needs of the child and their family by an Occupational Therapist in the Children's Disability Team.

6. Assessment

6.1 The Occupational Therapist assessment for the Accessible Housing Register will consider the person's immediate and long-term needs, their carers/ family, current social and environmental situation, medical condition, how they are currently managing and any risks. Proposed requirements and potential solutions will be discussed with the individual.

The Occupational Therapist will explore with the person if their needs can be resolved in their current property with the provision of equipment and/or adaptations and will recommend what is necessary and appropriate to meet the person's needs.

City of Doncaster Council adaptations team will assess if it is technically feasible, reasonable and practicable to carry out the recommendations made by the Occupational Therapy for adaptations to a property.

Where stair lifts, vertical lifts or ceiling track hoists are assessed as a suitable option but not technically feasible, confirmation will be required from a company specialising in supply/fit of said equipment to confirm this decision.

A scheme of Major adaptations will not generally be considered where a person is under occupying a family home, for example where a family home is being occupied by a single or couple - although in certain circumstances it may be agreed to be the only suitable option. Any adaptations would be subject to written permission from the owner/ Landlord.

- 6.2 Assessment of need will establish whether the applicant can resolve their own housing need via adaptation, or where rehousing is the most appropriate outcome.
- 6.3 The applicant's current needs will be assessed within the Doncaster Council's Allocation Policy in terms of registration and eligible bedroom allowance. Any additional housing need will be assessed by St Leger Homes of Doncaster in accordance with Doncaster Council's Housing Allocations Policy.
- 6.4 Following the assessment, the details of eligible applicants are entered on the Accessible Housing Register database to be potentially "matched" to an appropriate property when it becomes available.
- 6.5 Recommendations for eligible properties on the Accessible Housing Register are assessed in terms of level of risk due to medical need, and eligible un- adapted (if applicable) and adapted property type. Confirmation is sent in writing to the applicant from St Leger Homes of Doncaster. This includes assessed property requirements and their band on Doncaster Council Allocation Policy. See section 7 and 8 for more information regarding eligibility and banding.
- 6.6 The applicants on the Accessible Housing Register require adapted properties to meet their assessed needs. Applicants cannot be on both the general housing register and the accessible housing register as this would not be equitable. Applicants will not be considered for un-adapted properties or those requiring substantial further adaptations, unless it is identified by the Housing Solutions Group that their need cannot be met within the current housing stock.

- 6.7 Applicants on the Accessible Housing Register are not required to place bids on properties advertised by St Leger Homes of Doncaster at www.stlegerhomes.co.uk. The co-ordinator will identify suitable properties that meet the assessed needs reducing risks to the applicant's health, safety and well-being.
- 6.8 Tenancies for adapted properties allocated via the Accessible Housing Register will be in the sole name of the individual who was assessed as requiring the adapted property.

7. Eligibility Criteria/Accessible Housing Register Process

Applicants with an assessed housing need that results from their disability/medical condition will be accepted onto the Accessible Housing Register in accordance with the following conditions:

<p>Eligible for Accessible Housing Register – On Priority</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emergency medical priority where the applicant's health and safety is severely affected by their current housing situation and they are at great risk of physical or psychological harm. 2. Where the applicant is in hospital awaiting discharge but prevented from returning home as their current home cannot be adapted to meet their needs. 3. Where the applicant is suitably housed in an adapted property but have an urgent need to move to be near to carers who provide a substantial amount of support, without which the applicant would be unable to live independently in the community. 4. Where conditions in point 1 are met, and an applicant lives in a private sector property and it is not feasible to adapt the property, either because of technical difficulties or prohibitive costs to be undertaken. 5. Where conditions in point 1 are met, and an applicant lives in a private sector property and any adaptations would not provide a medium/long term solution, and the applicant would be at risk in the future. 6. In all complex situations in points 4-5, these cases may be referred to the Housing Solutions Group, to enable a review of their options to agree an appropriate course of action. 7. Where an applicant has been assessed as unintentionally homeless, in priority need (vulnerable as defined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996) with an assessed need for this type of accommodation. 8. Where there are other identified housing needs awarded Platinum or Gold Banding which are not related to a
--	--

	medical rehousing need with an assessed need for this type of property.
Eligible for Accessible Housing Register - Not On Priority	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where the applicant is suitably housed in an adapted social housing property but would prefer to move to another area and this can only be achieved by moving to another adapted property. 2. Where there are other identified housing needs which are not related to a medical rehousing need, with the exception of applicants who have a desire to move from one adapted property to another.
Not Eligible for Accessible Housing Register	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where an applicant's needs are or can be met within their current home e.g. via equipment, adaptations and there are no other identified housing needs e.g. overcrowding. 2. Where an applicant's housing needs can be resolved by the applicant. 3. Where there is no housing need relating to the applicant's eligible medical condition and impacting upon functional ability. 4. Where an owner occupier's needs can be met via adaptations to their property and they refuse adaptations. 5. Applicants who own or have a financial interest and/or have transferred ownership of a property but have continuing rights to live there with equity in their property of more than £120,000 will not be registered unless they have an assessed housing need which they are unable to resolve. This is to support access to affordable housing predominantly for older people to access appropriate sheltered housing and reduce demand on Adult Social Care.
St Leger Homes	St Leger Homes will assess any other identified housing need in accordance with Doncaster Council's Housing Allocations Policy.

8. Priority banding

8.1 Priority banding is awarded to an applicant with a medical need to be rehoused, who cannot resolve their own housing needs, where there is an identified risk in their current home and to applicants assessed in Platinum or Gold band with an assessed need for this type of accommodation. Priority banding is maintained until there is a change of circumstances such as successful rehousing.

8.2 One reasonable offer of accommodation will be made to applicants who are in hospital or placed in a temporary care setting from hospital awaiting discharge

but prevented from returning home as their current home cannot be adapted to meet their needs.

- 8.3 Where an applicant has been assessed as unintentionally homeless, in priority need (vulnerable as defined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996) with an assessed need for this type of accommodation.

All other applicants will be made two reasonable offers of accommodation

If refused their application will be suspended for 6 months and not nominated for a property during this period for further details see section 14 – Refusals and Penalties

Each case will be assessed individually as to the reason for their refusal before a decision is made to suspend an application.

Applicants will be informed in writing and will be given the right to a review. This is consistent with Doncaster Council's Housing Allocations Policy.

9. Appeals procedure

- 9.1 Where an applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria for Accessible Housing Register confirmation is sent to the applicant, outlining the eligibility criteria and signposting to other services for advice and assistance where necessary. The applicant will have a right of appeal against the Accessible Housing Register decision.
- 9.2 The Housing Solutions Group will review appeals against the decision not to include applicants on the Accessible Housing Register. Written confirmation of the outcome will be sent to the applicant.
- 9.3 People who do not meet the criteria for Accessible Housing Register can apply to be reassessed if their circumstances have changed significantly with regards to their medical/ health or environment.

10. Bidding and Reviews

- 10.1 People on Accessible Housing Register are advised of the type of adapted properties they are eligible to secure appropriate to their needs. The applicant will not be eligible for a property type which does not reflect the recommendation made by the assessing Occupational Therapist and puts them at similar or greater risk than their current circumstances.
- 10.2 Should an applicant housed by Accessible Housing Register request a move to a different area and have no identified housing need or risk in their current home they will be added as a non-priority applicant after a qualifying period of 12 months in their current home. They can also consider mutual exchange but

would only be able to proceed if the new property met their identified medical needs for all parties involved in the application.

- 10.3 Regular reviews of the applicants on Accessible Housing Register will be conducted to take account of changes in circumstances and act on feedback from offers made.
- 10.4 If there is limited, or no, housing stock meeting an applicant's assessed needs in their area of choice, we will advise applicants accordingly once all options have been explored. This will give them the opportunity to review their area of choice if necessary. Applicants who choose not to do so will be reducing their chances of being rehoused.

11. Matching Properties

- 11.1 Accessible Housing registrants will be nominated for properties according to clinical need, level of risk and property attributes as ascertained by the Occupational Therapist.
- 11.2 Adapted properties identified to meet the person's needs must be viewed and assessed for suitability and recommendations for any minor adaptations and equipment not already in situ.

12. Nominations

- 12.1 When a Local Authority or Housing Association adapted property becomes vacant, the basic details and property attributes along with photos and a floor plan where available are sent to the Accessible Housing Team for nominations.
- 12.2 The details of the property are entered onto the Access data system and a match is run for people's requirements in line with the features of the property, and will be matched in priority order.
- 12.3 A shortlist is generated as in 11.1 and sent to Doncaster Home Choice and the applicants are contacted in turn and offered a joint viewing of the property a formal offer may be made if the property is suitable. Housing Association properties are sent to the appropriate agency to approach the nominees, and viewing arranged to ensure that they meet assessed needs.

- 12.4 If an applicant declines a property the reasons given are recorded and the case is reviewed where necessary. A note of whether the accommodation offered was suitable will also be made. The next person on the list is then approached. Where an applicant accepts a suitable property they are removed from the Accessible Housing Register when their tenancy commences.
- 12.5 Should any Accessible Housing Register property not have any nominations and those waiting have been exhausted the property would be advertised for general let/bidding through Home Choice.
- 12.6 The turnaround time from nomination request to shortlist submission is 5 working days to minimise void rent loss and to meet Service Level Agreements, this includes ensuring that the property is in good condition for the successful tenant to be allocated.

13 Adaptations

- 13.1 In exceptional circumstances we may undertake adaptations to the current property whilst the applicant is waiting to be rehoused in order to ensure that any risk is minimised.
- 13.2 Should the applicant meet the criteria for adaptations and the property can be adapted, and they are also eligible for Accessible Housing Register, the applicant can remain on the Accessible Housing Register in exceptional circumstances and will be approved through Housing Solutions Group.
- 13.3 Should a suitable property be identified before costs are incurred for adaptations then the applicant should consider moving as a cost effective option and the adaptations cancelled.
- 13.4 Where an owner occupier's needs can be met via adaptations to their property and they refuse adaptations, they will not be added to the Accessible Housing Register.

Applicants who own or have a financial interest and/or have transferred ownership of a property but have continuing rights to live there with equity in their property of more than £120,000 will not be registered unless they have an assessed housing need which they are unable to resolve. This is to support access to affordable housing predominantly for older people to access appropriate sheltered housing and reduce demand on Adult Social Care.

14 Refusals and Penalties

14.1 Applicants will be subject to the terms of City of Doncaster Council's Housing Allocations policy.

14.2 This is;

- Hospital discharges in the platinum band will receive one suitable offer of accommodation,
- Any offer would need to be suitable and reasonable to the patient. Should someone not have their expectations met, then there would be dialogue between the patient, the Hospital and St Leger Homes about any options including other suitable alternative accommodation
- Once this is exhausted, refusal of a reasonable and suitable will result in their application being suspended for 6 months and no further offer being made during this period.
- Homeless applicants in the platinum, gold or silver bands will receive one suitable offer of accommodation, refusal of which will result in their application being suspended for 6 months and no further offer being made during this period. Their priority will also be removed.
- All other applicants will receive two suitable offers before their application is suspended for six months and no further offers will be made during this period.

Glossary of Terms

Accessible Housing accommodation that is purpose built or adapted to meet the needs of disabled people.

Adaptable housing accommodation which can be adapted to meet the needs of the applicant.

Equipment provision to assist or enable the applicant to carry out activities of daily living including personal hygiene, mobility, toileting, etc.

Void empty properties awaiting tenancy.

Choice based lettings system of allocating social housing, encouraging choice and control for the applicant in where they want to live.

Property category property categorised in terms of type and level of adaptation.