

GUIDANCE FOR CARERS WHO ARE CONSIDERING AN ADAPTATION TO THEIR PROPERTY

We understand that you may be considering an adaptation to your property in connection with your role as a foster carer, adoptive parent or Special Guardian of a child/ren on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council.

There is a process by which such applications for funding from the County Council can be approved. This document will guide you through this procedure to ensure that you are fully informed about all of the stages of the process.

(1) ELIGIBILITY

There are certain eligibility requirements in place before an application for an adaptation to your property can be made. This is in relation to the **purpose for which you want an adaptation**.

Any request for funding made to the County Council must satisfy at least one of the following criteria before it can be considered:

- To provide extra capacity in your home to care for another child on behalf of the County Council
- To secure a long-term placement for a child already in your care
- To enable sibling groups for whom you are caring to remain together
- To meet the needs of a child with multiple disabilities in your care
- To meet certain health and safety requirements, which otherwise would mean that a child in your care would have to be moved

You must also be the **legal owner of the property in question** before an application for an adaptation can be considered. Therefore, if you are renting a property, we cannot consider adapting your home.

(2) PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS

If you have met one or more of the eligibility requirements outlined above, you will need to discuss the options with your **supervising social worker** in the first instance. Further discussions may also take place, for example with the child/ren's social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer, where appropriate.

If there is merit in the proposal, the **Team Manager** will agree an application can be made. Please note this doesn't guarantee that a grant will be made.

Upon the approval of the Team Manager, **you will be required to obtain three quotes for the cost of the proposed building work**. The lowest quote is usually the one that is agreed by the County Council.

(3) APPLICATION PROCESS

The fostering social worker and child's social worker will complete the application form with you. As part of this, you will be asked to consider:

- The details of the work required to your property, including the total cost** obtained in your building quotation and the relevant timescales for the work to be completed
- How such an adaptation will benefit the child/ren in your care
- Whether there are other appropriate funding options available to you

Consideration will also be made in relation to previous funding requests you have made to the County Council for adaptations to your property.

***please ensure that you have considered any additional costs to the original building quote, including VAT and costs for building plans, if known*

(4) MEANS TESTING

Nottinghamshire County Council adopts a **flexible, shared-cost policy** in relation to grants and loans. Therefore, there is some expectation that you make a financial contribution to the cost of the adaptation, where possible.

If your application for funding is over £2,500 in total, means testing may be undertaken. A means test examines all your sources of income and expenditure, as well as Council Tax, mortgage repayments, private pensions, court commitments and savings. This is in order to determine how much the County Council will consider funding, and how much we expect you to contribute as part of the process.

If your application for funding is less than £2,500 in total, the County Council will pay this funding in full if your application is successful in the approvals process.

(5) APPROVALS PROCESS

Your application, along with the results of the means testing (if undertaken), will then be **under the consideration of the Children's Service Manager.**

If approval is made by the Children's Service Manager, the next steps of the process depend on the value of your adaptation request:

	Funding Request (total)	Approvals Process
A	£2,500 or less	(1) A legal contract will be produced which you must sign (2) The County Council will then authorise payment and the building work can begin
B	Between £2,501 and £10,000	(1) Your application will then be considered by a Group Manager . (2) If the Group Manager approves your application, a legal contract will be produced which you must sign. (3) The County Council will then authorise the payment agreed to as part of the means testing process (4) Building work can begin
C	Between £10,001 and £30,000	(1) Your application will then be considered by a Group Manager . (2) If the Group Manager approves your application, a legal charge will be produced which you must sign. (3) The County Council will then authorise the payment agreed to as part of the means testing process (4) Building work can begin
D	In excess of £30,000	(1) Your application will then be considered by a Group Manager . (2) If the Group Manager approves your application, a report will be drafted to go to the Children and Young People's Committee , where elected

	<p>members will deliberate on your application for funding</p> <p>(3) If approved at Committee, a legal charge will be produced which you must sign.</p> <p>(4) The County Council will then authorise the payment agreed to as part of the means testing process</p> <p>(5) Building work can begin</p>
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(6) LEGAL PROCESS

As potentially large sums of money are involved, a legal agreement will need to be put in place. As highlighted in the table above, there are different legal documents depending on the value of the funding you have requested.

- Up to £10,000 (A and B in the table above)

A legal contract will be produced, called a **Financial Assistance Agreement**. This puts in writing the detail of the financial assistance offered by the County Council, including the conditions by which we will pay the grant and what will happen if you breach your part of the agreement. In some circumstances, this may include repayment of the grant to the County Council if you choose not to continue as a carer with us.

This must be signed by you and a representative from the County Council

- £10,001 or more (C and D in the table above)

In this situation, a **Legal Charge** will be produced. This will make clear any expectations of you in connection with the grant, including any terms and conditions of the money being granted to you. Typically this agreement will set out expectations about your intention to continue as a carer, and what may happen if you choose to stop caring for a child/ren, including repayment of the grant to the County Council.

Usually legal charges are in place for a **certain number of years**. This duration will be explained to you before you sign the legal charge, so you are fully aware of how long the commitment will last.

You will be required to sign the legal charge, alongside a representative from the County Council. You may wish to seek legal representation before you choose to commit to this agreement.

(7) FINANCE

The council usually releases the money in three instalments - the last one being when the work has been completed to the satisfaction of a building inspector.

It is important to note that the value of funding agreed by the County Council cannot be increased once you reach this stage. This is why it is **very important to ensure that you have considered all the costs that will be incurred for the adaptation** before you begin your application.

(8) OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important to note that you will be responsible for the building work:

As you manage the building project, you must obtain the necessary building/planning permissions and ensure that you have fully considered the costs that will be incurred from the proposed building work.

It will also be your responsibility to talk to your mortgage provider about the proposed adaptation work if applicable.