

Aids and Adaptations Policy



Review lead / author name and job title	Director of Homes		
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 An effective Aids and Adaptations Policy is important for us to provide high quality, good value affordable housing to enable you to enhance your quality of life.

2. Policy Aim

- 2.1 This policy seeks to ensure that we support people with a disability to live as independently as possible by:

- Providing clear information and advice about property adaptations and related services to tenants and stakeholders.
- Having clear and effective procedures for the provision of adaptations to support people who have disabilities to live in their own homes.

3. Legislation and Links to Other Documents

- 3.1 This policy and its relevant procedures are designed to ensure that we meet our obligations as set out in the following legislation and guidance:

- European Commission Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005

4. Obligations and Scope

- 4.1 We will work with other organisations to ensure that there is a joint approach between us and them, and, where possible, sharing of financial costs.
- 4.2 Subject to the conditions set out in this policy, we will provide minor (<£1,000) and major (>£1,000) adaptations to help meet your needs.
- 4.3 This policy applies to general needs and directly managed supported and housing with care tenants. It does not apply to leaseholders and shared owners except where specific terms within the individual lease apply.
- 4.4 We are not responsible for installing or maintaining adaptations where an application for outright sale (Right to Buy or Right to Acquire) is currently live.

5. Good Practice

- 5.1 In line with good practice and guidance, adaptations should be proportionate and timely, reducing delays in installation and alleviating the likelihood of an unplanned hospital admission or an unwanted move to residential or nursing care.
- 5.2 This Policy is linked to our Wellbeing Strategy which emphasises working in partnership to achieve better tenant outcomes. The following good practice should also be considered:
- 2006 College of Occupational Therapists (COT) Minor adaptations without delay
 - Home adaptations for disabled people: a detailed guide to related legislation, guidance and good practice, published by the Homes Adaptations Consortium in 2013

6. Our Approach

- 6.1 Where necessary, we will request an Occupational Therapist (OT) referral to help establish and develop the most suitable and adequately designed adaptation, and to ensure that the installation meets the bespoke needs of the person requesting the adaptation.
- 6.2 We will fund **minor adaptations** costing up to £1,000 from our own resources. All works will be subject to our approved budgets, and requests for adaptations should be made by either; carers, OT, hospital, clinical doctors, GPs, or other specialists such as caseworkers and social workers.
- 6.3 Self-assessment and self-prescription requests for adaptations made by you, relatives, friends, our staff, will generally be accepted for the following minor works:
- Fitting lever handles to doors
 - Fitting lever taps
 - Installation of grab rails and stair rails
 - Fixed toilet frames
 - Key safe
- 6.4 We will ask you to apply to your local authority for Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) funding for major adaptations. We will generally allocate from our own resources only after other funding sources have been explored. You will also be directed to your local authority to request specialist equipment and mobility aids.

- 6.5 If the local authority fails to award a DFG for a major adaptation, or the grant they allocate results in a shortfall, a maximum allocation of £5,000 may be made by us. All approvals for funding must be within our approved budget and agreed by the Director of Homes.
- 6.6 The maximum allocation of £5,000 is the total budget available within a financial year. This may be used to support a single project or shared across multiple projects, as long as the total does not exceed £5,000. In exceptional circumstances, we may consider providing additional funding.
- 6.7 We will only consider applications for major adaptations that have recommendations following an assessment by an OT. We will also take into consideration the future impact adaptations will have on the home e.g. alterations affect the safety of the building users.
- 6.8 Where appropriate, for example, when no applications for major adaptations have been received that year, we may use the £5,000 to provide major adaptations in the most suitable way. This may include major adaptations to communal areas that will benefit the tenants who need them most.
- 6.9 Examples of a major adaptation include:
- Stairlift
 - Provision of new kitchen/bath/shower room, WC and/or bedroom facility
 - Main access paths - widening, lowering and/or providing an alternative type of surface material (e.g., for wheelchair access)
 - External storage area - enclosed and ventilated for mobility scooters with recharging facilities
 - Fixed ramp in place of steps, including any necessary handrails and guarding
 - Door-call, entry-phone with door camera, and/or remote-control door release system
 - Doors - widening, removal or re-hanging to facilitate wheelchair manoeuvre etc.
- 6.10 Appointments will be prioritised by our contractor at the time of requesting a minor adaptation or when we raise an order for a major adaptation. Major work that exceeds normal completion timescales will be discussed with you.
- 6.11 Subject to the conditions set out within this policy to achieve a better link between planned work and adaptations, we will consider how a design modification or full adaptation (e.g. bathroom to wet room swap) would benefit you.

- 6.12 We may also provide planned adaptations, e.g. wet room installations in supported schemes or housing with care schemes, as standard, and, instead of a bathroom replacement, to support the future needs of our service users and to pre-empt any future adaptation requests.
- 6.13 We will carry out repairs and maintenance to adaptations except where a defect liability or warranty period still applies. We will ensure that you are aware of any potential future charge prior to commencing the works.
- 6.14 6.13 excludes maintaining any aids e.g. mobility walkers, carers screens, pillow alarms etc. which are typically supplied and maintained by you or the local authority.
- 6.15 Supported schemes or housing with care schemes may also have additional facilities such as mobility scooter stores and/or charging points. Where such facilities are limited, or do not exist, adaptations to accommodate scooters will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.16 We recognise that leaseholders may wish to undertake adaptations to their homes. In these circumstances, we will also refer leaseholders to the Shared Owners' Application for Alterations Policy and will support requests for reasonable adaptations that allow shared owners to continue to live in their homes.

7. Eligibility for Adaptations

- 7.1 Adaptations will not usually be carried out when:
- The adaptation cannot reasonably be installed or fitted at the property due to the structure of the building. In such circumstances, suitable alternative housing options will be sought.
 - You, the person applying for the adaptation, are actively seeking a move and likely to be re-housed within two years. In this circumstance, minor works to enhance the quality of life may be agreed in consultation with you and the OT if required.
 - You, the person applying for the adaptation, have planned surgery or are participating in rehabilitation where the outcome is anticipated to make an improvement in your ability to manage daily activities.
 - The request is for a level-access or walk-in shower, and the property is an above ground floor flat without lift access. In this case, we will usually support a transfer request to a ground floor flat, or a flat with lift access.
- 7.2 We will not unreasonably withhold our consent to any major alterations that enables you to continue living within your home.

8. Letting Adapted Homes and Removing Adaptations and Equipment

- 8.1 Minor adaptations should be fitted following sign-up and if possible, prior to moving in. Major adaptations should also be installed before you, the person needing the adaptations, move into the property. Major Adaptations in void properties will be considered on a case-by-case basis and balanced against the length of time the property might be empty.
- 8.2 To make the best use of adaptations, we will seek to re-let adapted properties to tenants who will benefit from the adaptations that have been carried out. Major adaptations, where funded/part funded by a local authority, should remain in place for their lifespan, unless an alternative adaptation or planned replacement is agreed.
- 8.3 There may be circumstances where it may be cost-effective to remove adaptations, e.g. stair lifts from properties when they are no longer required and to use them elsewhere.

9. Complaints and Compensation

- 9.1 Complaints and compensation for works are considered under a separate Policy. A copy of our Complaints Policy and Compensation Policy can be found on our website.

10. Information and Engagement

- 10.1 In accordance with our values, we are committed to tenant consultation and involvement and will:
- Promote the aids and adaptations service, and periodically share information within newsletters and using social media
 - Provide clear and accurate information and advice when you apply for adaptations or need assistive equipment
 - Inform you of our role in the adaptations process
 - Fully involve individuals in the decisions regarding the adaptation to your home
 - Provide you with key dates affecting your adaptation process
 - Obtain feedback from you
 - We will fully participate in local discussions regarding the development of local agreements

- 10.2 We will liaise with the OT, local authorities and other agencies, as appropriate, to ensure you have effective access to services and are kept fully informed and involved. Joint visits will be carried out as appropriate.
- 10.3 We will provide clear advisory information on our website and in the leaflets that we give to you. We will also undertake periodic reviews of this information with your assistance to ensure that it is helpful.
- 10.4 We will ensure all OT assessment records, whether paper or digital, are secure from opportunistic viewing, inappropriate access, theft, loss or damage.

11. Inspection and Monitoring

- 11.1 We will set service standards for our aids and adaptation service and will aim to monitor:
- Number of applications for adaptations
 - Number and type of adaptations installed
 - Number of adaptation requests rejected, and the reason for rejection
 - Waiting times for adaptations
 - Customer satisfaction
 - Number of complaints
 - Number, type and location of adapted properties.
- 11.2 We will maintain accurate and up-to-date asset management data and include relevant information about major aids and adaptations. These details are available to inform the management of allocations and lettings, and the maintenance of the adaptation itself.
- 11.3 Our Property Services team aims to inspect all major adaptations costing over £1,000. Where a completion has occurred, our housing management system will record the defects period so that any defects can be reported.
- 11.4 Our systems record details of customers who have told us that they have a disability.

12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 12.1 We will make reasonable adjustments when applying this policy for people who have a disability and will consider the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

- 12.2 We will consider your requirements when prioritising adaptations, especially those who have greater needs or are at greater risk. Our staff shall seek to understand first and then ask questions to learn more.

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