



# Adaptations Policy

## 1. Aim of policy

To work collaboratively with statutory and voluntary partner agencies to meet the needs of disabled customers. We'll do this by helping to provide and adapt accommodation suitable for their needs.

## 2. Scope of policy

This policy applies to all tenancies. While it applies to customers holding Starter Tenancies, we'd expect that a property would meet all the needs of an incoming tenant alternatively, that we'd be made aware at the point of offer, that adaptations to the dwelling would be required.

It doesn't apply to customers who are leaseholders (including shared owners), market rental or accommodation where we're the leaseholder. Customers who may require adaptations to their homes should seek the advice and assistance of the local authority. They may be entitled to a local authority funded Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

## 3. Policy statement

This policy confirms how we'll consider applications for disabled adaptations to all general needs and sheltered accommodation within our ownership. It also includes how we'll repair and maintain adaptations.

We expect to make reasonable adjustments (by carrying out adaptations) to our homes where necessary. This'll balance the needs of individual residents, future customers, the cost of adaptations and the impact on the property. We may facilitate a transfer to another property or adaptation of an alternative property if this is the more appropriate solution.

We'll consider carrying out minor aids and adaptation work or give approval for works to be carried out to our housing stock where; -

- it's at the request of our customer (either for them or for a member of their household) and/or the work is recommended by a qualified Occupational Therapist (OT)
- the property is the principal home of the person who needs the adaptation
- it's practical for the works to be carried out
- there's available funding and
- the work wouldn't present us with extensive costs when the adaptations require removal (either during the tenancy, or at the end of the tenancy).

We do not expect all requests for minor aids and/or adaptations to be accompanied by a DP15 form.

We'll look to find an alternative home for our customer if we can't adapt or provide



permission for adaptations to their current home.

We'll ensure that all adaptations are repaired and maintained appropriately, including following up on any warranty claims

#### **4. Policy**

Adaptations' can be defined as alterations to a property which materially improve the ability of disabled people to live independently. These adaptations can be relatively minor, such as the fitting of grab rails, or major such as fitting a level access shower.

Adaptations may also include the construction of a hard standing for a vehicle/mobility vehicle within the curtilage of a dwelling, where an individual has significant mobility problems and cannot walk from wherever the vehicle is parked to the property. An adaptation would not include the purchase of a vehicle/mobility vehicle or the provision of a garage / storage / maintenance facility for the vehicle.

Where a property is less than 12 years old, we will check any warranties to ensure the proposed work does not invalidate them. We'll only consider DFG requests from customers who have a signed tenancy agreement. We may also give permission for customers to install their own adaptations via our permissions procedure.

#### **FUNDING AND PERMISSION FOR DISABLED ADAPTATIONS WITH A VALUE LESS THAN £1,500;-**

Irrespective of the applicant's financial circumstances we'll meet, from our own resources, any requests for minor disabled adaptations to their property providing the total cost does not exceed £1500 per customer, per year. This is capped for each request. Applications for minor adaptations, where we will meet the total cost of the adaptations, will be completed as soon as practically possible.

#### **FUNDING AND PERMISSION FOR DISABLED ADAPTATIONS WITH A VALUE MORE THAN £1,500;-**

Where works will cost more than £1,500 the OT should refer the request to the local authority for funding through a (DFG). We'll not make a financial contribution to work that cost more than £1,500. If the applicant's required to contribute to the cost of the adaptations, the local authority will write to the tenant. The work will only proceed if the tenant pays their contribution.

Where an applicant does not qualify for a grant, we'll work with them, the local authority and other agencies to establish whether any alternative funding is available or consider a structured and suitable payment plan.

Where the cost of work is likely to exceed the local authority financial limit for DFGs (currently £30,000), we'll work with local authority partners to meet the applicants needs while making best use of our housing stock - this may include moving them to alternative accommodation.



Permission for adaptations to be carried out will generally be given. However, major adaptations that require structural changes to the building are likely to be refused as are works that are detrimental to neighbouring properties - unless no other option is available for the applicant.

Where Building Regulation consent and/or planning permission is required this must be obtained prior to any work commencing and copies of any permissions/ discharge of conditions supplied to us. Without the necessary consents and/or permissions we will not give permission for the work to go ahead.

We expect to refuse requests from applicants for adaptations where one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- the applicant is significantly under-occupying their current accommodation – 2 spare rooms or more.
- The applicant is in rent arrears.
- more suitable alternative accommodation could be available to better meet the applicant's needs. In these circumstances alternative accommodation will be sought in co-operation with the local authority and assistance may be offered to meet removal and other disturbance costs.

Through floor lifts and hoists will form part of our insurance inspections and be managed and maintained by us. For stair-lifts, we'll take responsibility from the date of installation and ensure this work is carried out promptly and to an appropriate standard and taking account of any regulatory requirements. Responsibility for arranging service visits will rest with the customer, but we will fund servicing and breakdown costs once the warranty period has ended.

As far as practically possible we'll ensure that adapted properties are re-let to applicants who need the adaptations that have been made to a specific property. Local authority partners will be alerted to the type of adaptation in the property when a nomination request is made to them. We'll work closely with our local authority partners to ensure that where required and as far as practically possible new build housing schemes include a proportion of homes to meet the needs of disabled residents on their housing registers. In addition, when developing new homes, we'll consider including multi-purpose facilities which can be used by able bodied and disabled persons alike (for example level access showers) or are readily adaptable (built to Life Time Homes Standards).

A request for a mutual exchange may be refused where the property has design features for the physically disabled and on the assignment, there would be no disabled person living in the property.

## **5. Statutory requirements**

- Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- Planning permission where appropriate
- Building Regulations Document M



- Equality Act 2010

#### 6. Related policies & procedures

- Asset Management Strategy
- Housing management Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Mobility Vehicle Policy
- Allocations Lettings and Voids Policy
- Mutual Exchange Policy
- Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy
- Data Protection Policy

#### 7. Monitor and review process

This policy will be reviewed every year.

We monitor our performance in complying with our legal obligations and report regularly through our Executive Team.

At intervals we complete internal audits and arrange for an independent audit of our procedures and records to ensure they reflect good practice are being followed.

Author	Owner	Date approved	Review date
Kevin Hartshorn	Julian Chun	June 2020	June 2021