



Aids & Adaptations Policy

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Policy Statement

We will ensure that our homes meet the needs of our residents. This may mean carrying out adaptations to help them live in their home independently.

Where a resident is disabled or has a long term illness, we will provide equipment or carry out adaptations to their home which means that they can remain living in that property. Alternatively, where it may be more appropriate for the resident to move to another property that better suits their needs, we will discuss the options available to them.

We are committed to providing a high quality aids and adaptations service that is responsive, flexible and efficient.

We will comply with the Equality Act 2010 (as amended 2017) and our Single Equality Policy in relation to carrying out reasonable adjustments in communal areas.

If we are unable to help, we will support residents by signposting them to other agencies, such as charities or the Local Authority who fund major adaptations through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

We will support residents by contributing to funding where they fail to qualify for grants.

Where there are Home Improvement Agencies operating in the area we work, we will publicise these services so that our residents can benefit.

The Legislative Framework

This policy relates to the following legislation:

- Part M: Building Regulations
- Equality Act 2010 (as amended 2017)
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- Part I of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 requires Local Authorities to help people pay for adaptations to their home, up to a maximum grant of £30,000. All grant applications are subject to a statutory means test which assesses whether and how much, the resident must contribute towards the cost of the works.

This Policy supports delivery of our Single Equality Policy.

Service criteria

This service only applies to tenanted properties however; we will signpost leaseholders or shared owners to the relevant agencies.

To qualify for the service, residents must have a physical disability, mobility problems or have a long term illness, which means that they need aids or adaptations in order to remain in their home safely. Once we have made an initial assessment to determine that the resident meets the criteria, we will discuss the options available and agree an approach.

We will take into account any advice or recommendations provided by a GP, occupational therapist, or specialist consultant in agreeing works with a resident.

Where other alternatives are identified, such as a transfer to an adapted or sheltered property, we will support the resident and facilitate a transfer on their behalf. Where residents need assistance with the transfer process, which could include assistance with packing or dealing with utility companies, this will be considered.

We will visit the resident to ascertain their physical requirements and identify the adaptations recommended.

Our Service

We will fund minor aids and adaptations up to the value of £1000. This threshold is likely to cover the following:

- Replacement of taps with lever taps
- Replacement of door handles with adapted handles
- Additional locks to doors or windows
- Window winders
- Installation of handrails
- Enlargement of door openings and or dropping of door thresholds
- Provision of ramps
- Installation of non-slip flooring
- Provision of low temperature radiators, boxing in of pipework
- Installation of paths and paving
- Repositioning of electrical accessories, fuseboards/consumer units
- Repositioning of previously installed equipment
- Provision of bath seats, key safes and other personal equipment
- Facilities for the storage of mobility scooters
- Installation of over bath showers
- Installation of additional lighting/external lighting
- Payment of equipment service contract costs, such as for stairlifts

This list is indicative of the kind of works included within this Policy were it is practically possible. However, the Head of Asset Management has discretion to agree works exceeding £1,000 to a limit of £5,000, for example in the case of the installation of ramps, particularly where several residents will benefit.

Where residents have asked for reasonable adjustments to communal areas (as defined in the Equality Act 2010 as amended 2017), we will consult with other residents and where an adaptation is possible, we will carry out the required adaptations.

We have staff that will become Trusted Assessors who are able to assess resident's needs and specify minor works. Where technical input is needed to either specify the requirements of the resident or design an adaptation, we will use Occupational Therapists and specialist surveyors.

Once works have been specified and agreed with the resident, minor works will be completed within 7 days of the inspection. If work is of a technical nature or equipment needs to be ordered, we will complete the work within 28 days of the specification being agreed. Emphasis will be placed on the contractor to carry out work in advance of this timescale where possible.

Where major adaptations are required such as level access showers, through-floor lifts, stair lifts or multiple adaptations, we will refer these to the relevant Local Authority. They will decide the works which are necessary and appropriate, send out grant application forms and help the resident with completing the forms where appropriate. The grant application will be assessed in accordance with the Local Authority's criteria and mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) obligations.

We may consider requests for top up funding where an adaptation will cost more than the maximum allowed under The Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (currently £30,000). Each case will depend on a recommendation from the Occupational Therapist, evidence that other long term options have been considered, that other funding sources have been explored and subject to available budgets.

Where residents fail to qualify for DFG or other grants, we will consider contributing to the cost of major works. Any contribution exceeding £5,000 must be referred to the Executive team for a decision.

We will also support residents to find alternative funding sources, such as through charities like the Royal British Legion, the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Family Association (SSAFA) or Social Information on Disability (SID).

If a resident is under occupying a property or where a more suitable adapted property may be available, we will discuss with the resident any alternative options prior to approving minor or major adaptations. If the resident chooses not to transfer, no pressure will be placed on the resident.

We will inspect all major adaptations and a proportion of minor works on completion to ensure that the work has carried out to standard and to check that the resident is satisfied with the work.

Once installed, we will maintain adaptations or equipment. However, where major adaptations originally funded by DFG require replacement, we will support the resident to claim for a second DFG to fund the works.

A budget has been set aside each year and will be reviewed annually.

We will publicise the service to ensure that residents have full access to the options available to them and we will target publicity to those residents likely to need aids or adaptations

Major Works Programmes

Before we start this programme of work we will identify homes that have already been adapted as well as residents requiring minor adaptations. This will ensure that their needs are taken into account during the programmed works.

We will protect or replace existing adaptations where they are affected by the planned works.

Where new minor adaptations are required in homes affected by the planned works we will consider providing these as part of the programme where this makes sound practical and economic sense for the resident and the business.

Environmental and Communal Area Improvements

When planning environmental and communal area improvements with residents we will ensure that the needs of disabled residents and visitors are met where possible.

Future transfers and mutual exchanges

Where we have funded adaptations to a property and the resident wishes to transfer or mutual exchange to another property, it is our discretion to determine whether such a move can take place. This is in accordance with relevant housing legislation. Each case will be reviewed individually to take into account personal circumstances and will include consultation with the resident.

We will advise residents who are in receipt of this service that we may refuse to carry out adaptations to successive dwellings unless there is an over-riding need to move, for example overcrowding.

Resident Satisfaction

Resident satisfaction with the completed works will be used to manage performance and identify service improvements.

Record keeping

We will maintain a register of properties with aids and adaptations and the type of adaptation carried out. We will also record details of all extended warranties, guarantees and servicing programmes. Once an extended warranty or guarantee has expired we will take on all maintenance of the equipment or adaptation.

Recycling Aids and Adaptations

If someone leaves a property we will try to relet it to someone whose needs best match the type of aids or adaptations in the property, whether that be to a Rosebery resident or an applicant on the Local Authority's Housing Need Register.

Where this is not possible, we will try to re-use or recycle any adaptations if they are in good working order and are suitable for another resident. We may seek the advice of an Occupational Therapist when assessing whether equipment can be re-used.

Level access showers are a major alteration to a property and are considered a permanent fixture once they are fitted. Even if the property is not relet to someone who needs a level access shower, we will not, generally remove it. If the new tenant wishes to replace the level access shower with a bath, they will need to obtain written permission and the work will have to be undertaken at their expense.

Concrete ramps are a permanent fixture and will not be removed.

Once a resident has accepted the tenancy of an adapted property, should they require additional adaptations, these will be considered in accordance with this Policy.

If we are unable to re-use or store aids and adaptations that are no longer required, we will offer them to other agencies.

Removal of aids or adaptations is the last option that we consider.

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities. We want to ensure that our customers receive culturally sensitive services which recognise issues of discrimination as well as celebrating their diversity.

We recognise that certain groups and individuals are more likely to be discriminated against. This may be on the grounds of race, gender, including transgender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief, language or other personal attributes. We are committed to eliminating all forms of unfair discrimination and promoting equality.

Training

We will ensure that our Staff are aware of this Policy in order to comply with our commitments.

Policy review

This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless there is a change in legislation or regulatory requirements.