

**POLICY APPROVALS FRONT SHEET**

Document Title	<b>Aids and Adaptations Policy</b>		
Reference	HS_POL_ASM_A&A_1.2	Version	1
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<b>Amendments made</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims moved to Policy statement section</li> <li>• Aims made a bullet pointed list</li> <li>• Clarification of Lettings &amp; Home Ownership Managers responsibility within policy</li> <li>• Summary of LA's responsibility to manage applications added</li> <li>• 4.1 – requirement is for having had the disability for 12 months AND likely to have it for 12 months</li> <li>• Section 6 – titled updated</li> <li>• 7.3 – policy referenced and clarification on budget limitations included</li> <li>• 7.5 section added re resident contributions</li> </ul> <p>submitted to: SMT Date: 7/12/18</p>
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# Aids & Adaptations Policy and Procedure



<b>Reference:</b>	HS_POL_ASM_A&A_1.2	<b>Author:</b>	Liz Karsten
<b>Scope:</b>	Housing Solutions	<b>Approved by:</b>	SMT
<b>Legislation:</b>	Equality Act 2010 The Chronically Sick and Disabled Person Act 1970 Care Act 2014 The Housing Grants Construction & Regeneration Act 1996	<b>Date of approval:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2018
<b>Regulatory/ Governance:</b>		<b>Date of next review:</b>	December 2021
<b>Related Policies:</b>	Equality & Diversity Policy Allocations Policy Tenancy Policy Safeguarding adults at risk policy and procedure Safeguarding children and young people policy and procedure Asset Management Strategy Complaints Policy Data protection policy		

## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Housing Solutions (HS) will ensure that, wherever possible, residents who have a disability can have appropriate adaptations carried out to their homes to enhance their quality of life and maximise their independence in a safe home environment.
- 1.2 The key aims of this policy are:
  - to put the needs of disabled residents first in Housing Solutions decision-making about adaptations;
  - to maximise the grants and other resources available for adaptations, ensuring value for money at all times;
  - to build up a register of adapted properties
  - to utilise existing adapted housing stock to best effect
  - to work closely with our partners in local authorities to make adaptations to disabled residents' homes;
  - to work within the framework of Housing Solutions' Asset Management Strategy

- with regard to the longer term viability of our properties and ensuring best value;
- to comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements in relation to disabled aids and adaptations.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all residents of Housing Solutions properties, their partner or a member of the household who is a permanent resident in the property who have a disability and require aids and adaptations (A&A) within their home.
- 2.2 Adaptations for children of residents will only be completed at the property which is their principal home

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Head of Asset Management and Head of Operations will have ultimate responsibility for ensuring adherence to this policy. However, day to day responsibility will rest with the Surveying Services Manager – to ensure properties are adapted appropriately to meet the needs of current and future customers and make best use of the associations properties - and Lettings and Home Ownership Manager, where applicable, to ensure properties are allocated appropriately to make best use of the adaptations installed and safeguard investment made in the properties.
- 3.2 It is the responsibility of the appropriate local authority to manage all requests for aids and adaptations from our customers from point of first report to them through to completion of works. We will work closely with the local authority to ensure all stages of the process we are responsible for are completed in a timely manner.
- 3.3 The surveying services team will take the lead in working with local authorities to procure and deliver all approved major adaptations to our properties, liaising with members of the housing management department as appropriate and as required.

## 4. Definitions

- 4.1 **Disability** – a physical, sensory or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the customer’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities within their home. Long-term, being defined as a disability that has impacted on the resident for at least 12 months and is likely to continue to do so for a further 12 months or for the remainder of the persons life
- 4.2 **Aids** – freestanding portable medical aids e.g toilet frames, shower chairs, portable hoists
- 4.3 **Adaptations** – additions, alterations (structural and non-structural) or improvements to the fabric of the building
- 4.4 **Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)** – means tested grant funding accessed via the local authority environmental services department specifically for approved A&A works

## 5. Legislation

- 5.1 The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on public bodies to have due regard to promoting equality when carrying out their functions. Chapter 15, Part 2, Chapter 2, Section 20 states that where a physical feature puts a disabled person at significant disadvantage in comparison to a person who is not disabled then there is a requirement for the duty holder to take such steps as are reasonable and practicable to avoid the disadvantage.
- 5.2 The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 & The Care Act 2014 places a duty on the local authority to assist disabled people in obtaining adaptations for their home. The local authority is to make all arrangements to facilitate these works. All requests for such adaptations should be made via the local authorities social services/environmental health service department(s)
- 5.3 The Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 provides for the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) which is administered by the local authority and mandatory for certain adaptations and means tested in all cases.

## 6. Categories of Aids and Adaptations

- 6.1 There are 3 categories of A&A covered by this policy:

### Equipment and Aids

6.1.1 Where qualifying criteria are met, the local authority will provide a range of freestanding portable or medical aids including but not limited to:

- Portable Hoists
- Hospital beds
- Toilet frames
- Shower chairs
- Bathing equipment

### Minor Adaptations

6.1.2 These are works that will cost £1,500 or less, which will be funded by HS, and are recommended by an Occupational Therapist. These include but are not limited to:

- Grab rails
- Hand rails
- Lever taps
- Small ramps or removable ramps
- Flashing or amplified doorbells

It is acknowledged that the timely provision of minor works can often sustain the independence of residents and so postpone the need for substantial major adaptations. The provision of minor adaptations is therefore seen as an important preventative service.

## **Major Adaptations**

6.1.3 These are works that cost in excess of £1,500 and usually involve structural alterations, improvements or additions to the fabric of the building. Major adaptations are partially or wholly funded via a local authority means tested Disabled Facilities Grant up to a maximum value of £30,000. The means testing process may assess that a resident contribution is necessary and in these cases this contribution must be met by the resident in line with the conditions outlined in section 7.5 below.

Major adaptations include but are not limited to:

- Level Access showers
- Large permanent ramps
- Stair lifts
- Through floor lifts
- Tracked Hoists
- Door widening

6.1.4 Adaptations that will not be funded include:

- Adaptations for the use of or storage of mobility scooters
- Safe play areas
- Extensions & Loft Conversions would only be considered if an alternative suitably sized property did not exist with HS stock
- Any adaptations that result in the resident still being unable to access a significant proportion of their home.

## **7. Procedure**

### **Applications and Approval**

- 7.1 All enquiries and/or applications for adaptations should be referred to the local authority, in the first instance, who will determine eligibility before referring to an Occupational Therapist (OT) for assessment of needs.
- 7.2 Where it is assessed that equipment or aids are required these will be provided directly to the resident by the OT/local authority
- 7.3 Where minor adaptations are identified the OT will send a written recommendation to our designated officer who will review and raise a PO for works to be undertaken within our normal repair response times, as outlined in our Repairs and Maintenance Policy. All minor adaptations will be funded via the annual A&A budget, subject to available budget allocation.
- 7.4 Where major adaptations are identified the OT will provide a written recommendation to the appropriate local authority for submission to the DFG panel for approval in principle

7.4.1 Where works are approved, in principle, by panel the OT will provide written recommendations to our designated officer. The designated officer will review, in conjunction with the OT, in order to confirm they are satisfied the works are reasonable, feasible and practicable in relation to the type, age and condition of the property. It must also be established that the proposals are the most appropriate use of the housing stock available to meet the residents long term needs.

7.4.2 Where the designated officer is satisfied that the recommendations are the most appropriate solution they will instruct the production of specifications and drawings. Wherever possible and appropriate we will make allowances for resident choices within the specification, this will mainly be around items like tiling, paint colours and alike. Once received, these drawings will then be submitted to the OT and the resident for their approval and signing before being sent out to contractors for quotations to be produced. Once quotations have been received, these are then sent to the local authority for approval. On receipt of this approval the designated officer will instruct the successful contractor, agree start dates with the resident and then progress works to completion, ensuring that all related permissions have been obtained. HS will endeavour to complete all approved adaptations within 12 months of receipt of the recommendations.

7.4.3 If the designated officer is not satisfied that the proposed works are reasonable, feasible and practical in relation to the type, age and condition of the property or that they are not the most appropriate use of the housing stock and/or the following conditions apply:

- Where the property is currently under or over occupied or will become such if adaptations are undertaken
- Where it is not possible to adapt a property or if there are likely to be excessive costs
- Where a property that is already more suitably adapted/part adapted is available

7.4.4 It may be necessary for a more detailed review of the OT recommendations to be undertaken and therefore the full options appraisal process would be initiated.

The options appraisal would be undertaken by a representative of Asset Management in consultation with the Lettings & Homeownership Manager to ensure all factors are taken into consideration, for example:

- Would rehousing to already adapted suitable housing stock (HS or other provider) provide the best possible outcome?
- How will the adaptations affect the future let-ability of the property?

7.4.5 HS will not progress with an adaptation where possession proceedings have commenced or a possession order is already in place.

7.4.6 Requests for adaptations will not be approved where a Right to Buy application

has been received. In these cases residents will be signposted to the assistance available through the local authority DFG programme once they have bought their home.

### **Resident Contributions**

- 7.5 Where it is identified, via the DFG means testing assessment, that a resident contribution is required Housing Solutions will contribute up to the first £1000 of this cost. This contribution will be funded via the Minor A&A budget, subject to available funds.
- 7.6 The remainder of the residents contribution is payable by the resident directly to HS and should be collected on the basis of a 50% payment up front and 50% payment on completion of works.
- 7.7 Dependent on individual circumstances, we will give consideration to agreeing a repayment plan with residents over a period of up to a maximum of 12 months.

### **Installing Own Aids and Adaptations**

- 7.8 If residents wish to install their own aids and adaptations, for example over bath showers or stair lifts, then they must follow the normal permissions process and put their request in writing to us prior to undertaking any works. If permission is granted residents will be responsible for all servicing and maintenance costs associated with the installation and may be asked to remove any installed items should they vacate the property at a later date. Further details of the permissions process can be found in the Planned Maintenance Investment and Repairs and Maintenance Policies.

### **Adaptations to Common Parts/Communal Access**

- 7.9 Aids and adaptations to common parts and communal areas will be assessed on a case by case basis taking into account the appropriateness of the proposed work in relation to the property as well as impact it will have on all building users, in terms of health & safety and overall need.
- 7.10 Stair lifts will not be installed on communal stairwells

### **Maintenance and Servicing**

- 7.11 Where appropriate, HS will arrange and cover all costs for servicing and maintenance contracts of all fixed equipment that is installed.
- 7.12 Where aids and adaptations are subject to servicing and maintenance programmes (e.g. stair lifts, through floor lifts, fixed track hoists) residents will be expected to allow reasonable access to enable these inspections. Failure to allow access may result in residents being held liable for all associated costs.

### **Future transfers, mutual exchanges and occupation of adapted properties**

- 7.13 Where major or extensive adaptations have been completed at a property it is expected that the resident requiring the adaptation will continue to live at the address for the foreseeable future, unless their personal circumstances in relation to medical needs deem this impossible. Any application to undertake a mutual exchange will therefore not be given consent under these grounds.
- 7.14 Where major or extensive adaptations have been wholly or partly funded through a DFG it is expected the resident will remain living at the property for a minimum of 5 years and no further application for grant funding will be considered for that or any other address until the expiration of this period.
- 7.15 Where significant adaptations have been made to a property and the person requiring these works dies or is unable to remain in occupation the remaining family members may be asked to move to alternative accommodation to allow the adapted property to be let more appropriately. Refer to the Tenancy and Succession policies.

#### **Allocation of and best use of existing adapted properties**

- 7.16 HS will maintain a register of adapted properties to ensure the most appropriate allocation of these homes as they become void.
- 7.17 Where adapted properties become void HS will endeavour to allocate these, in the first instance, to those applicants/residents that require the installed adaptations and meet any other criteria required in relation to that particular property.
- 7.18 In line with our Allocations Policy, HS will endeavour to allocate properties on the basis that they meet the needs of the applicant. Therefore, where adapted properties do not fully meet the needs of the disabled applicant HS reserves the right to refuse the nomination.
- 7.19 In situations where HS are considering offering a property that may require further adaptations to ensure it meets the need of the resident/applicant, the property will first be assessed by the HS surveyor and local authorities OT for its suitability to meet these needs.
- 7.20 If the property is deemed unsuitable, or adaptations too extensive, HS reserve the right to refuse the nomination or withdraw the offer.
- 7.21 If the property is deemed suitable, works will be progressed as soon as reasonably practical in line with the normal procedures. Residents/Applicants will be expected to take up their tenancy as soon as practical after the property becomes available.

#### **Existing Customers**

- 7.22 Where it is considered that a move to alternative accommodation, rather than undertaking major adaptations to their existing home, would be the most appropriate solution to meet the needs of a disabled resident there may be a case for priority transfer on medical grounds. Cases of this nature will be dealt with in conjunction with our lettings team and in line with our Allocations policy.

#### **Removal of Aids and Adaptations**



- 7.23 An aid or adaptation to a property that has been funded by way of a DFG is owned by HS and must not be removed by the resident during or at the end of their tenancy.
- 7.24 In circumstances where an aid or adaptation is no longer required, HS will consider removing it to see if it may be used in another home, otherwise it will generally be left in place.
- 7.25 HS will not normally remove structural adaptations to a property, for example, ramps, widened doors.

## **8. Equality & Diversity**

- 8.1 HS recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of its own Equality and Diversity Policy, the Human Rights Act 1998, and Equalities Act 2010. HS works closely with its partners to ensure it has a clear understanding of its resident community with clear regularly updated service user profiles. HS will record, analyse and monitor information on ethnicity, vulnerability and disability.

## **9. Confidentiality**

- 9.1 Under the Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Human Rights Act 1998, all personal and sensitive organisational information, however received, is treated as confidential. This includes:
- anything of a personal nature that is not a matter of public record about a resident, client, applicant, staff or board member
  - sensitive organisational information.
- 9.2 HS employees will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information where there is a legal basis for processing the information.

## **10. Review**

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis or more frequently in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, good practice or changes in other relevant Housing Solutions' policy.
- 10.2 Our performance in relation to the delivery of the services and activities set out in this policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through our established reporting mechanisms to our Senior Management Team, Executive Team, Board and associated committees.