

## INFORMATION

<b>Policy Name</b>	Adaptations Policy
<b>Effective Date(s)</b>	March 2021
<b>Approved By</b>	Customer Operations Committee
<b>Approval Date</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
<b>Policy Owner/Dept</b>	Asset - Investment
<b>Policy Author</b>	Property Services Manager
<b>Review Date</b>	January 2021
<b>Policy Framework Ref</b>	
<b>Version Number</b>	

## Version Control

Version	Date	Changes	Approver

Business Plan Theme			
Keep Everyone Safe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Be a Great Landlord	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deliver New Affordable Homes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation and Transformation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business Viability	<input type="checkbox"/>	People and Culture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>Relevant National Standards or Regulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value for Money Standard</li> <li>• Home Standard</li> <li>• Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard</li> </ul>
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<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulatory framework for social housing in England from 2012</li> <li>• Equalities Act 2010</li> <li>• UK-GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) and amended Data Protection Act 2018</li> <li>• Delivering Housing Adaptations for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide (2006)</li> <li>• Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and 2005</li> <li>• Minor Adaptations without Delay: A Practical Guide &amp; Technical Specifications for Housing Associations (2006)</li> <li>• Human Rights Act (1998)</li> <li>• Housing Act (1980) and (1995)</li> <li>• Chronically Sick &amp; Disabled Persons Act (1970)</li> <li>• The Care Act (2014)</li> <li>• Control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR) 2012</li> </ul>
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### 1. Purpose of the Policy

Your Housing Group (YHG) is committed to providing an adaptations service to meet the needs of its' residents with regard to independence, privacy and dignity within their own homes. YHG's aim is to help people to continue to live independently and comfortably in their homes for as long as possible and are committed to assist in making reasonable adjustments whenever it is practical to do so.

This policy provides the basis to develop and implement procedures for the provision of adaptations for residents.

### 2. Scope of the Policy

This policy covers all general needs, sheltered and supported living properties and their respective residents including shared owners. The policy excludes leaseholders, owner occupiers or residents who have started the process of purchasing their property through the 'right to buy' scheme.

This document is supported by an Adaptations Procedure which must always be read in-conjunction with this policy to ensure it is delivered in context.

### 3. Definitions

#### **Minor Adaptations:**

Works required with an estimated cost of less than £1000 that have been assessed by an Occupational Therapist or by the Adaptations Team.

Minor adaptations include items such as:

- Grab rails
- Additional bannister rails
- Plinths for WCs
- Floor to wall/ceiling rails
- Half height steps
- Door intercom system (single point)
- Lever taps
- Adjustments to door handles/window latches
- Flashing doorbells
- Key safes

The above list is not exhaustive; the Adaptations Team will review and assess each request on an individual basis.

### **Major Adaptations:**

Works with an estimated cost of more than £1,000. All such requests will be referred/signposted for an assessment by an Occupational Therapist to determine whether or not the adaptation is required and to establish a specification that meets the specific needs of the resident now, and in the future.

It is a requirement that residents themselves apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) by submitting the request to the relevant Local Authority (LA). Depending on the LA, the success of the application and the amount paid, will vary.

The Adaptations Team will assist residents throughout the application process, they will liaise with the OT's and the residents themselves to determine their specific needs are fully understood, this will include cultural or religious beliefs to ensure the adaptation is delivered with respect and dignity, they will also support residents from their initial contact requesting an adaptation to the completion of the works and in some cases beyond.

Cases will be reviewed and assessed on an individual basis and depending on the resident's circumstances may be progressed and funded by YHG, if DFG funding is not available.

Major adaptations include items such as:

- Level access showers
- Wet rooms

- Over bath showers
- Modular ramps
- Stair lifts/through floor lifts
- Closomat toilets
- Specialist baths

More specialised adaptations will be provided following individual case reviews with LA specialists and OT's and with regard to property suitability, these include; soundproofing, specialist flooring, light fitting adjustments, kitchen fittings, flagging of driveways and widening pathways to accommodate wheelchair access.

### **Complex Cases:**

Requests for adaptations that involve children with long term needs or residents with more specific medical conditions and requirements will be classed as complex cases which will require the involvement of LA specialists, OT's, medical specialists, social workers etc. to ensure their complex needs are met. Depending on the specific needs these will generally require the provision of an extension or room conversion to a property and in terms of funding will be carried out in partnership with the Local Authority.

## **4. Consultation**

The content of this policy has been reviewed by key internal stakeholders including housing management, Older Peoples Services, repairs and lettings.

The Customer Operations Committee Asset champions have reviewed, made recommendations and approved this policy.

## **5. Background and Context**

Local Authorities have had a statutory duty to provide assistance for major adaptations since 1990 and do so through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's). YHG recognises its' moral obligation to support the provision of adaptations financially and to assist and support our most vulnerable residents to access the grants to enable them to maintain independence in their own homes.

## **6. Policy Detail**

The policy sets out to define adaptations and facilitate ease of access for vulnerable residents with a disability, in a timely fashion.

The policy also sets out YHG's commitment to supporting vulnerable customers.

**Requests:**

Applications will be assessed for adaptations received from Occupational Therapists, General Practitioners or directly from a resident or their appointed representative.

All minor adaptation requests including self-referrals will be reviewed and evaluated by the Adaptations team who will instruct works accordingly if the works:

- Are under £1,000 in value
- Do not impact on the fabric of the building
- Do not need a major elemental renewal
- Are an essential need for the resident to live safely and comfortably in their own home

All major adaptation requests from residents or their appointed representatives will be signposted to the OT in their Local Authority area, contact names and numbers will be provided together with assistance and support where necessary.

If a major adaptation is not practical due to the size or type of the home, construction, location or the amount of works required residents may be encouraged to move to another more suitable property which better meets their needs or is more easily adapted. Full assistance and support will be given to residents in these circumstances and every effort will be made to find a suitable alternative property.

**Provision of funding:**

Budgets will be allocated each financial year for carrying out minor and major adaptation works, in response to exceptional demand the investment programme budget will support the delivery of adaptations where full component improvements are specified in addition; residents will be supported with their applications for Disabled Facilities Grants from the relevant LA wherever possible. The level of match funding with each LA will be established through Service Level Agreements to ensure that the maximum possible number of adaptations can be carried out annually, processes and procedures will be maintained to ensure they are delivered in a cost effective manner and represent value for money.

We will work in partnership with the LA's (and support providers where appropriate) to provide additional funding and support to ensure that the needs of residents are met. Where an applicant can fund the adaptation themselves or has access to funding from a 3<sup>rd</sup> party (including Local Authority) permission should be requested in writing from the Adaptations Team who in conjunction with housing management will grant approval for the works to proceed, works will only be refused in exceptional circumstances.

Adaptations requiring ongoing servicing and maintenance e.g. stairlifts will be supported and undertaken by YHG following the expiry of the warranty/guarantee period, including all costs where applicable.

Where YHG is to fund part or all the adaptation, this policy provides the grounds on which the application will be assessed for acceptance.

**An adaptation will not normally be paid for where:**

- the occupancy is temporary in nature
- the property is leased by YHG from a 'head landlord' in these cases
- the request will be referred to the head landlord

**In addition, the following would not normally be paid for:**

- Portable equipment including; WC seats, walking/toileting aids, shower seats, induction loops, portable heating or lighting etc.
- Removal of adaptations from properties unless requested by an OT following an individual assessment
- Permanent constructed ramp provision, modular ramps will be provided
- Scooter store/electric policy point for scooters/ramps for electric scooters
- Level access showers would not be replaced with a bath unless requested by an OT on an individual assessment basis
- Provision of over-bath showers, unless requested by an OT following individual assessment
- Additional parking facilities – disabled parking spaces will be made available through the Local Authority
- Adaptation of more than one entrance to a property
- Landscaping (unless essential for access purposes)
- Any adaptation that has a health and safety or negative impact on shared/communal areas – unless agreed through consultation with fellow residents and is safe to do so
- Major adaptations to an upper floor flat which is not served by a passenger lift
- Decoration following minor adaptations

**Specific considerations for new and existing residents:**

- New and existing residents (requesting a transfer) with existing conditions and requiring specific adaptation needs will not be moved into a property unless an OT's assessment has been carried out and the adaptations within the property meet their specific needs, this is to ensure the continued health, safety and wellbeing of the resident.

- Properties will be adapted for residents wherever possible at short notice e.g. hospital discharges to relieve bed blocking, discharging from care homes, etc... An OT assessment will always be obtained to identify specific works required.
- Adaptations within the first 12 months of a tenancy will be considered where the resident has a previously undiagnosed condition or an existing condition has significantly progressed, an OT assessment will be obtained.
- Adaptations will be provided supported by an OT's assessment and recommendations where a customer is moving into a new property due to their disability they can no longer manage in their current property.

### **Residents in rent arrears:**

In all cases (with the exception of residents in supported schemes) residents in arrears at the time of a request for a major adaptation will be asked to make an agreement to pay off their arrears. Payments under this agreement must commence and be maintained for a reasonable period before an adaptation is carried out. As a general guide:

- Where the arrears are less than £500 – the customer will be expected to maintain a payment plan for at least 3 months.
- Where the arrears are greater the £500 – the customer will be expected to maintain a payment plan for at least 6 months.

As with all other aspects of the Adaptations Policy and procedures, the requirements in relation to rent arrears may be varied under exceptional circumstances.

### **Re-housing as an alternative:**

In some circumstances where funding from YHG has been requested, it may be reasonable to meet the resident's needs by asking them to consider a move to another home. For example:

- If it would be easier/more cost effective to provide the adaptation in another location – usually another property benefiting from an existing adaptation or, is likely to be available (void) within a reasonable period.
- Where the property is completely unsuitable or cannot practically be adapted to meet the substantial needs of the resident.
- Where carrying out the work in the applicant's current home is likely to lead to significant further losses now or, in the future.
- Where it is considered likely that an applicant will need to, or wish to, move to other accommodation within the foreseeable future in order to meet longer term housing needs.

- Where the applicant is under-occupying their current home and it is considered likely that there would be demand for the home from larger households.

In all such circumstances, the option of a move will be discussed with the applicant and their views will be considered before a decision is made. If a move is mutually agreed a record of the requirements of the resident will be maintained until a suitable property is identified. The Adaptations Team in collaboration with the Housing and Lettings teams will seek to locate a suitable property. Assistance with the transfer process will be provided including liaising with relevant YHG internal departments where required.

Applicants not willing or unable to move will be further assessed in conjunction with the OT for adaptations to enable them to continue to live in their property.

In all cases where a move is agreed with the applicant, or is considered reasonable by YHG, a period of time will be agreed for a suitable move to be identified, following which a full review of the application will take place with an OT.

The purpose of this aspect of the Policy is to ensure that where a decision or an adaptation is deferred, pending a move, that there is a reasonable prospect of such a move being identified within a reasonable period.

#### **Maximising the value of investment in adaptations:**

- YHG will ensure that wherever possible, adaptations are utilised when re-letting a property. Residents in need of adapted properties will be given, where possible, priority for the allocation of housing with suitable adaptations that meet their needs.
- The relevant IT systems will be updated following the installation or removal of adaptations in order to keep an electronic record of adapted properties.
- Properties available for allocation will be placed on the Choice Based Lettings cycle – where possible. This will include adapted properties to ensure the process is open and transparent.
- Where significant adaptations have been carried out to a property a direct letting in partnership with the local authority teams may be made to match the property to the applicant in most need.
- YHG will endeavour to maximise use of profiling information from residents to enable it to identify and assess potential future demand for adaptations.
- Where adaptations have been carried out – they will not normally be reversed (i.e. where a bath has been removed in favour of a level access shower) unless fully supported by an OT's assessment.



### **Investment Programme works:**

- Residents identified during proposed reinvestment works as requiring an adaptation due to their disability will be referred to the Adaptations Team to provide appropriate advice, support and signposting (if necessary) to ensure suitable improvements are made to their property which meets their needs.
- Home Improvement works to all kitchens and bathrooms will include the provision of lever taps
- Where applicable, when replacing bathrooms consideration will be given to installing showers for residents with adaptation needs at the time of the upgrade and in conjunction with a survey/review of the resident's adaptation needs and advice from an OT.
- In all cases residents with specific needs will be signposted to an OT and supported throughout the process.

## **7. Responsibilities under this Policy**

The Director of Property & Building Safety has overall responsibility for the Adaptations Service.

The Asset Investment - Property Services Manager has the responsibility for the operational delivery of the adaptations service and implementation of the policy and related procedures.

The Adaptations Team will:

- make contact by telephone with all residents making a request and will maintain contact, provide support and liaise with the resident throughout the process.
- Will review and determine whether adaptations are eligible for financial assistance.
- Signpost residents including contact information for additional support where necessary
- Manage, monitor and reconcile the Adaptations' budgets with the Commercial Team and Finance
- Maintain detailed records on all adaptation requests and works delivered.
- Order relevant work and liaise with contractors, OT's and agencies
- Signpost, record and maintain communication with residents applying for alternative funding e.g. Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) particularly for major works.
- Maintain records on Orchard and provide monthly updates to Asset Strategy on component completions to update Keystone.
- Work in partnership with Local Authorities to provide additional funding and support to ensure needs of residents are met.

- Undertake desktop exercises to ensure OT recommendations fully meet the needs of individual residents now and into the future
- Review the OT recommendations and communicate the proposals to the resident. Any identified changes to be discussed with the OT and resident, the OT will issue a revised assessment if necessary.
- Arrange meetings for complex cases with representatives of appropriate professional bodies to establish works are specific to meet resident's needs.
- Engage with OTs, Social Services and other external agencies to ensure delivery of a quality, customer focussed service.
- Ensure works are procured in accordance with YHG's Operational Standing Orders.
- Ensure works are completed within established key performance indicators.

## **8. Risk Management**

YHG seeks to support residents to live independently and safely in their own homes and will achieve this through managing adaptations in an efficient, effective and economic manner with the health, safety and wellbeing being the foremost important factor. Failure to support residents through this policy may impact on the safety of residents leading to potential personal injury claims and reputational damage to the organisation.

Residents with a disability who need a specific adaptation will not be permitted to move into a property until an OT's assessment has been received and substantial works completed to ensure the safety of the resident. Cases will be reviewed on an individual basis in conjunction with the Lettings Team.

Risk here is not just risk to the business – the first and most crucial risk is that to the safety of the customer.

## **9. Data Protection, Record Storage and Retention**

Confidentiality is vitally important with regard to a resident's personal and medical information when applying for an adaptation, this information will be handled sensitively and in the strictest confidence.

YHG will be required to handle and store personal information, this will be carried out under YHG's Information Securities Procedure and ensuring compliance with the UK-GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and amended Data Protection Act 2018.

It is essential that all information is accurately recorded and maintained primarily within Orchard, Keystone and protected YHG IT systems, to ensure the service is delivered in line with this policy. The methods and procedures of record keeping being followed are contained within the Adaptations Procedures.

## **10. Equality and Diversity**

The policy complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and YHG's Equality and Diversity Inclusion Policy to ensure equality of all staff and customers without discrimination or prejudice. The policy will pay particular regard to ensure it is sensitive to such diversities surrounding access to adaptations and properties and the delivery of services.

On request, YHG will provide translations of all its documents, policies and procedures in various languages and other formats by contacting YHG.

## **11. Communication**

YHG recognises that an adaptation can have a significant impact on the lives of residents and their families it is therefore essential to involve and support the resident at each stage of the process and to respect their input. All residents will be contacted initially by telephone followed by written correspondence confirming the discussions and providing details of the process to be followed, contact will be maintained throughout using the resident's preferred method of communication. Residents will be provided with the name of the officer and contact details of the officer who will supporting them eir contact name and details

The policy will be available to internal staff through Youggle and externally to residents via the portal or website.

## **12. Learning and Development**

Specific training will be provided to the Adaptations Team and relevant members of the Asset Team to undertake and understand the application, management and delivery process.

General awareness training of this policy and related procedure will be provided to all relevant internal staff through training sessions presented by the AdaptationsTeam.

## **13. Performance Management of this Policy**

Monthly monitoring and reporting will be undertaken to ensure adaptations are delivered on a timely basis and controlled expenditure against budget.

Customer satisfaction information will be obtained through the CSAT system on 100% of major adaptations works and a minimum of 10% of all minor adaptations. Results of satisfaction surveys will be produced by the Customer Insight Team.

YHG will seek to involve customers/stakeholders in the review of performance either as part of normal monitoring meetings or via the Customer Engagement.

#### **14. Review of this Policy**

The policy will be reviewed by the Property Services Manager every two years, or sooner if required by statutory, regulatory, best practice, emerging developments, or circumstances arising from reviews of other Group wide policies.

### Related Documents

<b>Document Type</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Connected Policies and Procedures</b>	<b>Adaptations Procedure Operational Standing Orders Equality &amp; Diversity Inclusion Policy Information Securities Procedure</b>
<b>Forms and Letters</b>	
<b>Leaflets/Publicity Material</b>	<b>Resident's Adaptations Information Brochure Adaptations Customer Care Standards</b>
<b>Training Materials Available</b>	
<b>Intranet/ Website Page</b>	<b>Adaptations Website Page</b>

## Checklist

(To be completed by the Research and Policy Manager)

<b>Policy Name:</b>			
<b>Version No:</b>		<b>Effective Date:</b>	
<b>Status: New Policy /Partial Review/Full Review (please delete as appropriate)</b>			
<b>Previous Policy Name (where appropriate)</b>			
<b>Brief Summary of Changes from Previous Version:</b>			
<b>Internal Consultation Group:</b>		<b>Customer Consultation:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
		<b>Date of Customer Consultation:</b>	
		<b>Customer Consultation Brief Details:</b>	
<b>Link to Consultation Document(s):</b>			
<b>Date Initial Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken:</b>		<b>Equality Impact Assessor</b>	
<b>Reason for Decision:</b>			
<b>Date Full Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken:</b>			
<b>Brief Outline of any Changes Recommended from EIA:</b>			
<b>Data Protection/ GDPR Implications:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>			
<b>Brief Outline of Data Protection/GDPR Implications:</b>			
<b>Legal Implications:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Legal Panel Consulted:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Risk Implications:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Risk Logged on Datix:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>People:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Finance:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Asset:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>			
<b>Brief Summary of how Resource Implications have been addressed:</b>			
<b>Mandatory Read?</b> <input type="checkbox"/>		<b>If yes, please state which staff this is mandatory for:</b>	
<b>Communications Template Completed?</b>			
<b>Training Plan Completed?</b>			
<b>How will communication on this Policy take place: (please delete as appropriate)</b> Intranet/ YHG Website/ E-Learning/ Email/ Face to Face Training			
<b>Policy Owner: (Department)</b>		<b>Policy Author:</b>	
<b>Policy Checked by:</b>			<b>Date:</b>
<b>Policy Signed Off By: (service manager or sponsor):</b>			<b>Date:</b>
<b>Policy Approved By:</b>			<b>Date:</b>