

Adaptations Policy

DESIGN HEADER TO INCLUDE POLICY NAME AND DATE RANGE

INFORMATION

Policy Name	Adaptations Policy
Effective Date(s)	February 2023
Approved By	Risk & Compliance Group, Customer Services Committee
Approval Date	21 st February 2023
Policy Owner/Dept	Asset Investment - Ryan Appleby, Head of Asset Investment & Sustainability
Policy Author	Victoria Quellin - Adaptations Manager
Review Date	By February 2025
Version Number	2.0

Version Control

Version	Date	Changes	Approver

Your Housing Group Strategic Priorities			
Safe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Viability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landlord	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Growth	<input type="checkbox"/>
People	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>

Relevant National Standards or Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value for Money Standard - Home Standard - Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard
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Relevant Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equalities Act 2010 - Human Rights Act (1998) - Housing Act (1980) and (1995) - Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act (1970) - The Care Act (2014) - The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, as amended by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002
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Purpose of the Policy

Your Housing Group (YHG) is committed to providing an adaptations service to assist customers and members of their household to live independently and safely within their own home.

Aids and adaptations are reasonable adjustments to a customer's home that make it safer and more comfortable.

In some circumstances it may be reasonable to meet the customers' needs by asking them to consider a move to a more suitable property.

This policy sets out our approach to develop and implement procedures for the provision of adaptations for customers. It is also a guide for Occupational Therapists (OT) and other professionals to understand where YHG will be able to assist and cannot assist in terms of adaptations.

Under this policy YHG will consider solutions that best meet the long-term needs of residents and their families as a primary objective, ensuring their safety, well-being and quality of life.

Scope of the Policy

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

This document is supported by The Adaptations Management Plan which must always be read in conjunction with this policy to ensure it is delivered in context.

Minor Adaptations

Minor adaptations are works that do not significantly alter the structure of a property but assist a household to live more comfortably and are usually installed without the need of an OT report. Typically works that cost less than £1,000, this may include, but is not limited to:

- a) Grab rails
- b) Additional Bannister rails
- c) Floor to wall/ceiling rails
- d) Half height steps
- e) Door intercom system (single point)
- f) Lever taps
- g) Adjustments to door handles/window latches
- h) Flashing doorbells
- i) Key safes

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

Major Adaptations:

Major adaptations are works with an estimated cost of more than £1,000. All such requests will be referred/ signposted for an assessment by an OT to determine whether 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 customers 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.

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

Major adaptations include items such as:

- a) Level access showers
- b) Wet rooms
- c) Over bath showers
- d) Ramps
- e) Stair lifts/through floor lifts
- f) Wash/dry toilets
- g) Specialist baths

Where the customer is unsuccessful in obtaining grant funding or where other funding cannot be sourced by the customer and this has been evidenced, we may, in exceptional circumstances, consider match funding or funding the whole cost of the adaptation, each case will be considered on its own merits.

An adaptation will be refused under the following circumstances:

- h) the occupancy is temporary in nature
- i) the property is leased by YHG from a 'head landlord' in these cases the request will be referred to the head landlord
- j) It is not for the customer or a member of their registered household
- k) The need has not been identified through an Occupational Therapist
- l) The property is in disrepair or scheduled to be demolished
- m) It is not physically possible to alter the property in the requested way
- n) It would have an adverse impact on other residents

- o) It does not meet all planning and building regulation requirements, or there are legal or contractual reasons which prevents us from carrying out the adaptation; or it would present a health and safety risk
- p) Where the customer is seeking rehousing, made a right to buy/acquire application or other circumstances that would nullify the benefit of adapting the property
- q) If a tenant chooses to move from a property that has been fully adapted for their physical needs, no further adaptations will be undertaken to the new property, if these adaptations were available at the previous property. This will not apply where a tenant has been decanted from an adapted property

In addition, the following would not be paid for:

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

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 DFG 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.

Customers in rent arrears

Customers in arrears at the time of a request for a major adaptation may 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:

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

Your Housing Group recognises that from time to time a customer's circumstances may change unexpectedly, increasing the likelihood of arrears accruing. All cases will be reviewed individually.

Re-housing as an alternative:

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

- a) Where the property is completely unsuitable or cannot practically be adapted to meet the substantial needs of the resident.
- b) Where carrying out the work in the applicant's current home is likely to lead to significant further losses now or, in the future.
- c) Where it is considered likely that an applicant will need to, or wish to, move to other accommodation within the foreseeable future to meet longer term housing needs.
- d) 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 customer 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.

Maintenance, repairs, and service charges

On the expiry of a warranty, we will undertake repairs and maintenance to certain adaptations installed by the LA which become part of the fixtures and fittings of the property (where this is economically viable to do so).

Where a level access shower is fitted into the property then we will take full responsibility for the fixture as this becomes a key component of the property. We may introduce a service charge for servicing and maintenance where appropriate.

Background and Context

As a Registered Provider of social housing, we are required to co-operate with relevant organisations to provide an aids and adaptations service that meets customer's needs. This means working with local authorities who have statutory duties to fulfil under the terms of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants.

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.

Responsibilities under this Policy

The Director of Asset & Building Safety is responsible for this policy, its implementation and future review.

The Head of Investment & Sustainability is responsible for implementation of this policy, ensuring that the policy and associated procedures are embedded within the operational delivery of adaptations.

The Adaptations Manager is responsibility for the operational delivery of the adaptations service and ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are adequately trained to undertake them.

Risk Management

- a) YHG fails to support customers to live independently and safely in their own homes which could result in detriment to economic health, safety and wellbeing if their customers.

- b) YHG fails to maintain Consumer Standards and Regulatory Requirements in line with the objectives and framework set out by the Government.
- c) YHG fails to maintain properties to a good standard, impacting on the overall value of the Groups housing stock and financial viability of the organisation.
- d) YHG fails to adhere to this policy resulting in reputational harm as a result of its activities
- e) YHG fails to maintain expenditure within agreed budget level

Data Protection, Record Storage and Retention

Confidentiality is vitally important regarding customers personal and medical information when applying for an adaptation, this information will be handled sensitively, securely and in the strictest confidence.

Where YHG is responsible for collecting, processing, and storing 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 the Data Protection Act 2018. All data is retained and destroyed in line with our Retention and Disposal policy.

We have an appointed Data Protection Lead and the full Data Protection Policy is available upon request.

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 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.

14 Communication

This policy is available to view by all customers on the YHG website.

Internally this policy will be available to all YHG staff on the internal staff portal Youggle.

15 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 Adaptations Team.

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 major and minor adaptations works.

Results of satisfaction surveys will be produced by the Customer Insight Team.

Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed 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

Document Type	Name
Connected Policies and Procedures	Adaptations Procedure Operational Standing Orders Equality & Diversity Inclusion Policy Information Securities Procedure
Forms and Letters	
Leaflets/Publicity Material	Customers Adaptations Information Brochure Adaptations Customer Care Standards
Training Materials Available	
Intranet/ Website Page	Adaptations Website Page

Checklist

Policy Name: Adaptations Policy				
Version No: 2.0		Effective Date: 21 st February 2023		
Status: Full review				
Previous Policy Name (where appropriate) n/a				
Brief Summary of Changes from Previous Version:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Layout/ formatting of the policy has been amended making it much clearer to read and understand. - Information has been edited and condensed, and duplicate information removed, to reduce the number of pages. - Timescales for the delivery of adaptations has been removed - this is due to all Local Authorities having a different approach and view on this. 				
Internal Consultation Group:		Customer Consultation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Equality Impact Assessors Group		Date of Customer Consultation: See below		
		Customer Consultation Brief Details: Customer focus group – 14/10/22 Customer Connect Panel – 17/11/22		
Link to Consultation Document(s):				
Date Initial Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken: 24/10/22		Equality Impact Assessor: Dave Lovatt		
Reason for Decision: Reviewed in past 2 years				
Date Full Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken: n/a				
Brief Outline of any Changes Recommended from EIA: None recommended.				
Data Protection/ GDPR Implications: <input type="checkbox"/>				
Brief Outline of Data Protection/GDPR Implications:				
Legal Implications: <input type="checkbox"/>		Legal Panel Consulted: <input type="checkbox"/>		Date:
Risk Implications: <input type="checkbox"/>		Risk Logged on Datix: <input type="checkbox"/>		Date:
Resource Implications	People: <input type="checkbox"/>	Finance: <input type="checkbox"/>	Asset: <input type="checkbox"/>	Other: <input type="checkbox"/>
Brief Summary of how Resource Implications have been addressed:				
Mandatory Read? <input type="checkbox"/>		If yes, please state which staff this is mandatory for:		
Training Plan Completed?				
How will communication on this Policy take place: (please delete as appropriate) Intranet/ YHG Website / Email				
Policy Owner: (Department) Asset Investment		Policy Author: Victoria Quellin – Adaptations Manager		
Policy Checked by: Vicki Maguire – Research and Policy Manager				Date: 21/11/22
Policy Signed Off By: (service manager or sponsor): Head of Asset Investment & Sustainability				Date: 21/11/22
Policy Approved By: Risk & Compliance Group				Date: 06/02/23
Policy approved by: Customer Services Committee				Date: 21/02/23