

Adaptations Policy

DESIGN HEADER TO INCLUDE POLICY NAME AND DATE RANGE

INFORMATION

Policy Name	Adaptations Policy
Effective Date(s)	February 2025
Approved By	Customer Services Committee
Approval Date	6 th February 2025
Policy Owner/Dept	Kate Meredith - Asset Investment
Policy Author	Victoria Quellin - Adaptations Manager
Review Date	February 2027
Version Number	3.0

Version Control

Version	Date	Changes	Approver
1.0	Feb 21	New policy	Risk & Compliance Group
2.0	Feb 23	Minor changes as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Layout/ formatting of the policy amended to make it clearer to read and understand. • Information edited and condensed, and duplicate information removed, to reduce the number of pages. • Timescales for the delivery of adaptations removed due to all Local Authorities having a different approach and view on this. 	Risk & Compliance Group
3.0	Feb 25	Minor changes as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the minor adaptations threshold from £1000 to £1500. • Greater clarity on the reasons why a major adaptation may be refused. • Details included on the YHG Adaptations Panel 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity on which tenure types adaptations will be provided to. • Details added about ongoing responsibility for servicing, maintenance, and repairs of adaptations and approach to the removal of adaptations. 	
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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"> • Tenancy Standard • Safety & Quality Standard
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Relevant Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equalities Act 2010 • 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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1. Purpose of the Policy

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

This policy sets out YHG's approach to 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.

Adaptations are alterations to a customer's home that make it safer and more comfortable. In some circumstances it may be reasonable and practicable to meet the customer's needs by asking them to consider a move to a more suitable property.

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.

2. 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.

3. Definitions

- **Occupational Therapist (OT)** - Health care professionals who specialise in helping people with health issues that affect everyday activities to live independently.
- **Local Authority (LA)** - An administrative body in local government.
- **Disabled Facilities Grant Funding (-DFG)**- Grants provided by local authorities to help meet the cost of adapting a property.
- **Adaptations Panel**- An internal YHG panel, with representatives from Older Persons Services, Supported Housing, General Needs Housing, and the Adaptation Team. The panel meet monthly to provide collective decision making on complex adaptation referrals.
- **Minor adaptations** - adaptations that cost £1500 or less and do not significantly alter the structure of a property but assist a customer to live more comfortably and safely.
- **Major adaptations** – adaptations that cost more than £1500 for example a wet room, stairlift.

4. Consultation

Consultation has taken place with the following. Their feedback has been considered and the policy updated:

- Equality Impact Assessors Group
- Customer Scrutiny Panel
- Customer Connect Panel
- Executive Director of Housing & Customer Service
- Executive Director of Asset
- Director of Asset and Growth
- Service Manager – Housing Management
- Risk and Compliance Group
- Customer Service Committee

5. Background and Context

The "Safety and Quality" Consumer Standard places a requirement on YHG to provide an adaptations service to its customers, specifically YHG is required to:

- Assist tenants seeking adaptations to access appropriate services,
- Clearly communicate to tenants and relevant organisations how they will assist tenants seeking housing adaptations services.
- Co-operate with tenants, appropriate local authority (LA) departments and other relevant organisations so that a housing adaptations service is available to tenants where appropriate.

This policy aims to evidence how YHG complies with these requirements.

6. Policy Detail

Minor Adaptations

Minor adaptations are works that do not significantly alter the structure of a property but assist a customer to live more comfortably and safely and are usually installed without the need for an Occupational Therapist (OT) report.

YHG will fund minor adaptations up to the cost of £1500 per property.

Minor adaptations may include, but are not limited to:

- Grab rails
- Additional banister rails
- Floor to wall rails
- Half height steps
- Lever taps
- Flashing doorbells
- Key safes
- Vibrating pillow pads

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

YHG aims to provide a fully funded fast-track service for minor adaptations. We will maintain open communication with the customer and provide regular updates and will aim to install minor adaptations within 21 days, unless the adaptation must be manufactured, which can cause delays beyond YHG control.

In cases of hospital discharge, YHG will aim to install the minor adaptation within 24 hours, unless the request falls on a weekend or bank holiday. Only basic minor adaptations can be installed, for example:

- Grab rails
- Key safe

In cases where the cost of the works exceeds the minor threshold of £1500, YHG have the right to refuse the minor adaptation and the customer will need to self-refer to the Local Authority (LA) for assistance.

There are certain minor adaptations that YHG will not fund, although this list is not exhaustive:

- Portable equipment including walking/toilet aids, portable shower seats, induction loops, portable heating, or lighting.
- Assistive technology.
- Stable doors.
- Locks for internal doors (except boiler cupboard), locks for external gates.
- Mobility scooter store/electric point for mobility scooters.
- Additional parking facilities – disabled parking spaces may be made available by the customer applying to the LA.
- Landscaping.
- Decoration following the installation of a minor adaptation.
- Flooring following the installation of a minor adaptation.
- Replacement of internal doors due to customer damage.
- Safes for medication.

Major Adaptations

Major adaptations are works with an estimated cost of more than £1500. All such requests will be referred/ signposted for the customer to self-refer to the LA and request an assessment by an OT to determine whether the adaptation is required and to establish a specification that meets the specific needs of the customer now, and in the future.

Major adaptations include items such as:

- Over bath shower
- Ramp
- Stair lift
- Wash/dry toilet
- Door widening
- Wet room

YHG will only accept requests for major adaptations following an OT assessment by the LA.

It is a requirement that customers work with their LA to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). This process will automatically begin following an OT Assessment. 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 customer's circumstances may be progressed and funded by YHG, if DFG funding is not available. However, the customer must have been assessed by an OT and evidence received by the LA to confirm that they are not eligible for DFG.

YHG does not provide landlord consent, fully fund, or contribute towards major adaptations that are temporary.

All requests for major adaptations, regardless of funding arrangements must be reviewed by YHG and LAs and cannot proceed without YHG's landlord consent. YHG reserves the right to refuse major adaptations even if YHG are not being asked to make any contribution towards the cost of the work or to manage and deliver. Each case will be reviewed in detail and if appropriate referred to YHG's Adaptations Panel for a decision to be reached collectively.

As a landlord we will always consider the following factors before providing consent to the LA to proceed with a major adaptation:

- Is the request reasonable and practicable?
- How effective the change will be in assisting the customer or registered household member who requires the adjustment.
- Length of tenancy.
- Is the requested adaptation feasible?
- The availability of alternative suitable adapted properties.
- Cost of the works to LA / YHG or both.
- Maintenance costs to YHG.
- Under occupancy.

Where the customer is unsuccessful in obtaining DFG 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.

A major adaptation may be refused under the following circumstances:

- The occupancy is temporary in nature.
- Tenancy is less than 12 months old unless there are extenuating circumstances, therefore discretion may be applied.
- The property is leased by YHG from a 'head landlord' in these cases the request will need be referred to the head landlord.
- Shared owners, leaseholders and customers living in our private rented schemes.
- It is not for the customer or a member of their registered household.
- The need has not been identified through an Occupational Therapist.
- The property is in disrepair or scheduled to be demolished.
- It is not physically possible to alter the property in the requested way to meet the substantial needs of the customer.
- It would have an adverse impact on other customers.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- Where the existing footprint of the property is going to be compromised.
- The property is under occupied by one or more bedrooms, and it is considered likely that there would be demand for the home for larger households.
- Where we believe that this is not an effective use of resources or best value for money.
- The adaptation would involve large scale works.
- The adaptation would present a health and safety risk.
- Requests for adaptations in communal areas are considered on a case-by-case basis and all affected customers are consulted with.
- Mobility scooter stores and ramps
- Level access showers will not be replaced with a bath unless requested by an OT and each request will be reviewed.
- Provision of over bath showers unless requested by an OT following an assessment.
- Additional parking facilities - disabled parking spaces may be made available through the LA customer must apply direct.
- Adaptation of more than one entrance to a property.
- Landscaping.
- Major adaptations to an upper floor flat which is not served by a passenger lift.
- Loft conversion.

Adaptations Panel Approach

Major adaptation referrals may be presented to YHG's Adaptations Panel, which is held monthly.

The YHG Adaptations Panel is chaired by the Adaptations Manager and as a minimum, panel members to include:

- Adaptations Co-Ordinator
- Service Manager – General Needs, OPS and/or Supported (depending on the property)
- Regional or Assistant Housing Manager for the region of the properties being presented to panel.
- Representation from the team that will have ongoing responsibility for the maintenance and repair of the adaptation, e.g. Repairs and/or Compliance.

There are several factors which may trigger a case being presented to panel by the Adaptations Team, however all cases of the below will be referred to panel:

- The property is under occupied by one or more bedrooms.
- The property is within a high-rise building (i.e. over 18m/7 storey in height).

- The referral is requesting an extension or alteration to the property footprint.
- Tenancy is less than 12 months old.
- The customer is in rent arrears.
- When the Adaptations Team feel that a move to another property may be a more suitable solution.

Each case will be discussed in detail at the panel and a collective decision reached as to whether landlord consent is to be provided or if other actions are required, for example the support from tenancy management to assist with rehousing.

If the panel decline to approve an adaptation, the customer is informed in writing. If a customer subsequently appeals the decision, the case is presented to the Head of Asset Investment and relevant Housing Head of Service for review, with a written response provided to the customer within 30 days. If the customer remains dissatisfied with the decision, they are advised to progress this through the formal Complaints Policy and process.

Provision of funding

Budgets will be allocated each financial year for carrying out minor and major adaptation works; customers will be supported with their applications for DFG from the relevant LA wherever possible.

The contribution towards major adaptations within each LA will vary and YHG will work towards establishing Service Level Agreements to secure funding arrangements, to maximise the number of adaptations that can be carried out annually. Processes and procedures will be maintained to ensure that major adaptations are delivered in a cost-effective manner and represent value for money.

YHG will proactively collaborate with all LAs and monitor budgets both internally and externally to establish when budgets are likely to run into deficit.

Leasehold and Shared Ownership Properties

Customers living in leasehold properties, including shared ownership, and private rented properties, are required to ask permission from YHG before carrying out any major adaptations in their property. YHG will not unreasonably withhold permission however YHG is not responsible for making financial contribution to major adaptations in these properties and is also not responsible for providing minor adaptations.

YHG will provide advice and guidance where required to leaseholder, shared owners, and private rented tenants on accessing DFG and support from the LA where required.

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.

Re-housing as an alternative

In some circumstances, it may be reasonable and practicable to meet the customer's needs by asking them to consider a move to another home. Each request will be reviewed in detail. Examples include:

- The referral is requesting an extension or alteration to the property footprint.
- Where the property is completely unsuitable or cannot practically be adapted to meet the substantial needs of the resident.
- 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.
- 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. The case will also be referred to the YHG Adaptations Panel, which is held monthly.

If a move is mutually agreed a record of the requirements of the customer will be maintained until a suitable property is identified. Attempts will be made to find a suitable property for a period of up to 6 months. At this point, the case will be reviewed again by the Adaptations Panel, with consideration to the needs of the customer and how they are managing in their existing property. If considered appropriate and of no detriment to the customer's health and wellbeing, attempts may continue to be made to find a suitable property for a further 6 months (i.e. 12 months in total)

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.

Due to the shortage of Adapted homes available for people with disabilities, preference will be given to those with appropriate needs for adapted homes and advertisements will clearly state this.

Maintenance, repairs, and service charges

The length of the installation warranty on lifting equipment (e.g. stair lift, hoist) will vary across the LAs, from 12 months to 5 years, with some offering a lifetime warranty. Where a lifetime warranty is in place the LA will arrange and cover the cost of servicing, maintaining, and repairing the equipment for its entire life.

Where a lifetime warranty is not provided by the LA, on the expiry of the installation warranty, YHG will take responsibility for servicing, maintenance and repairs, and the equipment will form part of the compliance servicing regime.

For all non-lifting equipment/serviceable items (e.g. wet rooms) a standard 12-month defect period will apply, after which YHG will be responsible for repairs.

YHG will not take responsibility for servicing and maintenance of equipment a customer has purchased.

Removal of adaptations

When a property with a major adaptation becomes empty, YHG will work with the LA to identify the most appropriate allocation or will allocate based upon a YHG management move. YHG may request that an OT assesses the potential new customer by attending a joint viewing of the property.

If the adaptation was provided to meet a specific customer's requirement and cannot be used by another customer, it will be removed.

Existing customers who request adaptations to be removed will require a recommendation from an OT before removal.

YHG will not remove a stairlift as a temporary measure for the purpose of the customer decorating or having new flooring fitted. The customer will have to fund this via an approved contractor.

7. Responsibilities under this Policy

The roles and responsibilities for key stakeholders across YHG in the delivery of this policy, are detailed below.

- **Chief Executive** will need to ensure that resources are made available to allow the actions and measures detailed in this policy to be effectively delivered. They will discharge their responsibilities for the for the delivery of service in line with policy to the Chief Property Officer and Head of Asset Investment however will retain an oversight on progress/performance.

- **Board Members** will review reports and/or performance indicators that provide progress updates to ensure that YHG is meeting the requirements of its obligations under this policy and the Consumer Standards.

- **Director of Asset and Growth** will work closely with the Head of Asset Investment to seek assurances that the service is being delivered in line with this policy.

- **Head of Asset Investment** is responsible and accountable for the overall implementation, and regular review, of this policy and ensuring its objectives are achieved. They are also responsible for reporting to the Director of Asset and Growth, Executive Director of Asset, Board, and the Chief Executive. They will ensure that any service delivery issues are brought to the attention of the Director of Asset and Growth and provide regular updates on service delivery against budget.

- **Adaptations Team**, including the Adaptations Manager, Co-Ordinators and Administrator have has responsibility for the day-to-day operational delivery of the adaptations service. They will effectively manage the performance of the service delivery contractors, including their ongoing competence, and proactively monitor service delivery against targets. They will be responsible for customer communication and monitoring the quality of work undertaken by the contractor. The Adaptations Manager will act as the organisation's Subject Matter Expert (SME) for adaptations, managing the relationships with all relevant LAs and ensuring that YHG continues to work in line with the most up to date regulations and industry guidance.

- **Head of Housing/ Supported Housing/Older Persons Services** will ensure appropriate support and input to the Adaptations Team including attendance of their teams at the monthly Adaptations Panel meetings and support where re-housing is required, or where a referral for a major adaptation is refused.

8. Risk Management

The risks of not following this policy are that YHG will be unable to evidence compliance with the Safety and Quality Standard, and that YHG fails to support customers to live independently and safely in their own homes which could result in detriment to the health, safety, and wellbeing of customers.

9. Data Protection, Record Storage and Retention

Confidentiality regarding customers personal and medical information when applying for an adaptation, is vitally important, 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.

YHG will maintain data sharing arrangements with LAs to facilitate the sharing of information to support our customers. This will be managed with each LA on an individual basis.

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 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.

11. Communication

This policy will be communicated internally to staff via Youggle. Key stakeholders and key staff where this policy has specific impact will be briefed individually or collectively as required.

The policy will be shared with customers upon request. In addition, a customer adaptations guide is available, and regularly updated on the YHG website, detailing YHG's adaptations offer and how customers can request/access minor and major adaptations,

12. Learning and Development

General awareness training of this policy will be provided to all relevant internal staff through training sessions delivered by the Adaptations Manager.

The Adaptations team are expected to proactively maintain their continued professional development to keep up to date and abreast of industry and legislative changes.

13. Performance Management of this Policy

Monthly monitoring and reporting will be undertaken by the Adaptations Manager and presented to the Head of Asset Investment to ensure adaptations are delivered on a timely basis and controlled expenditure against budget. In turn the Head of Asset Investment will present performance monthly to the Chief Property Officer and quarterly to the Property Operations Committee.

Customer satisfaction on major and minor adaptations works will be collected monthly and presented quarterly by the Customer Insight Team.

14. 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	Operational Standing Orders Access to Housing Policy
Forms and Letters	
Leaflets/Publicity Material	Aids & Adaptations in Your Home -customer guide available on YHG website
Training Materials Available	
Intranet/ Website Page	Adaptations In Your Home -customer guide available on YHG website and adaptations page.

Checklist

Policy Name: Adaptations Policy	
Version No: 3.0	
Status: Full review	
Previous Policy Name (where appropriate) n/a	

Brief Summary of Changes from Previous Version:

- Increased the minor adaptations threshold from £1000 to £1500, in line with sector averages, thus meaning that major adaptations are those that cost more than £1500.
- Greater clarity with regards to the factors that are considered when receiving a recommendation for a major adaptation.
- Greater clarity on the reasons why a major adaptation may be refused.
- Details included on the purpose of YHG Adaptations Panel in considering major adaptations and the appeal process.
- Greater clarity on adaptations not being provided to leaseholders, shared owners, and private rented tenants.
- Details have been added to the policy on how long we will seek re-housing until the request for the adaptation is considered again.
- Further detail has been added in relation to responsibility for ongoing servicing, maintenance, and repairs of adaptations.
- The reference to consideration of rent arrears, prior to the approval of a major adaptation has been amended.
- A section regarding the removal of adaptations has been included, to ensure that YHG continues to make best use of adapted stock.

Internal Consultation Group: Equality Impact Assessors Group	Customer Consultation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Date of Customer Consultation: See below
	Customer Consultation Brief Details: Customer Scrutiny Panel – 25/10/24 Customer Connect Panel – 22/11/24
Link to Consultation Document(s):	
Date Initial Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken:	Equality Impact Assessor:
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	
Data Protection/ GDPR Implications: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Brief Outline of Data Protection/GDPR Implications: detailed in section 10 of the policy	

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? X	If yes, please state which staff this is mandatory for: All Housing Management staff – Housing, OPS and Supported	
Training Plan Completed?		
How will communication on this Policy take place: (please delete as appropriate) Intranet/ YHG Website - both		
Policy Owner: (Department) Asset Investment	Policy Author: Victoria Quellin – Adaptations Manager	
Policy Checked by: Kate Meredith	Date: 10/01/25	
Policy Signed Off By: (service manager or sponsor): Kate Meredith	Date: 10/01/25	
Policy Approved By: Risk & Compliance Group	Date: 21/01/25	
Policy approved by: Customer Services Committee	Date: 06/02/25	