

Aids and adaptations policy

Department: Housing & Environment (asset management)

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Aids and adaptations policy is to support Ealing Council's tenants that have a tenancy with the council, remain independent in their homes and carry out essential

daily activities, where they may require some practical help due to long-term health issues or disability, or, if this is not possible, housing management will support the resident in applying to the transfer register to look for suitable alternative accommodation, in accordance with our allocations policy.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy specifically refers to disabled adaptations to properties managed by the council for secure tenants of Ealing Council. This policy does not extend to homeowners, leaseholders or tenants applying for aids and adaptations to private sector or other social rented properties; such assistance is available through the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG).
- 2.2 Under the terms of this policy, a person is regarded as being disabled if they have a physical, sensory or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities within their home. A long-term effect refers to disabilities that have lasted for at least 12 months or where the effects of which will last for at least 12 months, or which are likely to last for the remainder of a person's life.
- 2.3 A disability is defined under the Equalities Act 2010 as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

3. Statutory and regulatory framework

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 sets out the duty to make reasonable adjustments. The Act states that is a requirement, where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to provide the auxiliary aid.
- 3.2 The work of this service must meet the requirements of the

Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards specifically the Safety and Quality Standard which sets out the expectations of the regulator in relation to Adaptations:

- registered providers should have a process in place to assist tenants in need of housing adaptations, which they must communicate to tenants. As part of this communication, registered providers are expected to inform tenants about the application process.
- where the registered provider provides a housing adaptations service, they should not unreasonably refuse a tenant's request for a housing adaptation.
- where a registered provider does not meet a tenant's request for a housing adaptation, the registered provider should consider whether it is appropriate to offer alternative measures in order to support the affected tenant, for example offering to transfer them to a home that is accessible or that can be adapted to meet their needs

3.3 The aids and adaptations service must also meet the requirements of the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard which sets out the expectations of the Regulator in relation to Fairness and Respect and Diverse Needs.

3.4 The regulator states that registered providers must use relevant information and data to understand the diverse needs of tenants, including those arising from protected characteristics, language barriers, and additional support needs and we must ensure that we treat tenants and prospective tenants with fairness and respect.

4. **Policy statement**

4.1 This policy sets out Ealing Council's approach when we receive a request from one of our residents for an adaptation to be installed within one of the homes we own and manage directly.

4.2 This policy supports our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

- 4.3 Ealing Council will endeavour to support all council tenants who require support to remain in their home and not restrict reasonable adjustment support to just those tenants who are defined as disabled based on the definition provided by the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.4 Ealing Council (social services- occupational therapy and sensory service) provides occupational therapist (OT) services to help individuals carry out everyday activities and lead independent lives. They offer support with moving around the home, getting out and about, dressing, using the bathroom, food preparation, and more. Residents can make a [referral online](#) or by calling 020 8825 8000.
- 4.5 Following completion of an assessment and scope of works by an OT, the housing management service will carry out a desk top assessment before any adaptations can be approved.
- 4.6 We will assess all instructions from an OT, those adaptations under £1,000 will be issued to our contractors and they will undertake the instructed work in a timely way, where it is reasonable and practical to do so. We will aim to carry out our minor aids and adaptations within 28 working days from when we issue the work to the contractor. Social Services Integrated Commissioning also undertake installations and supply of adaptation equipment up to a value of £1,000 via NRS.
- 4.7 Those adaptations with a budget range of £1,000 to £8,000 are assessed based on their nature to ensure efficient processing and alignment with existing programmes. Level access showers and kitchen adaptations requests are internally referred to asset management, where they are incorporated into the capital work programme for bathroom and kitchen replacements. Capital work contractors, alongside physiotherapists, conduct inspections to define the scope of works required. Other major adaptations requests falling outside the capital work programme are subject to a feasibility inspection conducted by a surveyor. If deemed viable, quotations are obtained, and a works order is raised in Open Housing for execution. We will aim to carry out our minor aids and adaptations in a timely manner.

- 4.8 All instructions from an OT, over £8,000 will be considered by our aids and adaptations panel. Where a particular adaptation is not feasible to undertake for the property, we will refer to and work with the OT, the resident, and others to explore suitable, alternative options. This may include reviewing the adaptation or supporting a transfer to alternative accommodation.
- 4.9 We will issue all major adaptations including those approved by the panel to our contractors and they will undertake the work in a timely way. We will aim to complete our major adaptations within 3 months.

5. Minor adaptations

- 5.1 Minor adaptations are works which cost £1,000 or less.
- 5.2 Examples of minor adaptations include:
- grab rails
 - handrails
 - steps
 - small ramps
 - flashing doorbells
 - painting doorframes a different colour
- 5.3 Freestanding aids are normally provided by adult social care or the NHS healthcare trust and can include, for example:
- hoists
 - toilet frames
 - bed levers
 - shower chairs
 - vibration mats

6. Major adaptations

- 6.1 Major adaptations are works that cost over £1,000 (except for some large pieces of re-sited equipment such as through floor lifts) and usually involve structural alterations to the property.
- 6.2 Major adaptations follow the criteria of the Construction and

Regeneration Act 1996 for DFGs and are to help facilitate:

- access to and from the home.
- making the dwelling or building safe for the disabled occupant and other persons residing with him/her
- access to a room used or usable as the principal family room
- access to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room for sleeping
- access to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room(s) in which there is a lavatory, a shower and or bath, a wash hand basin, or facilitating the use of such facilities by the disabled occupant
- the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled occupant
- the use by the disabled occupant of a source of power, light or heat by altering the position of one or more means of access to or control of that source or by providing additional means of control
- access and movement by the disabled occupant around the dwelling in order to enable him/her to care for a person who is normally resident in the dwelling and is in need of such care
- facilitating access to and from a garden by a disabled occupant

6.3 Examples of major adaptations include:

- level access showers
- large ramps
- door widening
- stair lifts
- through floor lifts
- mechanical hoists
- adjustable height kitchens

7. Qualification for major adaptations

7.1 Ealing Council will normally only consider a request for aids and adaptations if the person with a disability is the tenant, their partner or a member of the immediate family, and is

permanently resident in the household. This will be substantiated through a residency check. No age restrictions apply.

- 7.2 An assessment of needs, by an OT, must be undertaken for all major adaptations, which identifies any necessary and appropriate adaptations to meet the needs of the person with a disability.
- 7.3 If a resident feels that they may require an adaptation to their home, they may contact their housing officer. Similarly, during routine visits a housing officer may identify the need for minor adaptations.
- 7.4 Where necessary the housing officer will complete a person-centred fire risk assessment (PCFRA) and update Open Housing with any vulnerabilities so that where necessary we have up to date records for the property information boxes (PIB) held in our higher risk blocks.
- 7.5 The Housing Officer will refer the resident to an OT for an assessment where relevant. If adaptations are recommended, then this follows the route for either minor or major adaptations as appropriate.
- 7.6 All major adaptations over £8000 will be considered by Ealing Council's disabled adaptations panel. Ealing Council must be satisfied that the recommended works are:

- necessary and appropriate to meet the needs and prognosis of the occupant with a disability, having regard for end-of-life care protocols
- reasonable and practicable with regard to the type, age and condition of the home. For example, the council would not normally provide a level access shower to a first floor flat unless there was lift access to the first floor. The council may also consider the wider impact of the requested adaptation in relation to issues such as the makeup of the household, tenancy, regular visitors to the property and under-occupancy levels.
- can be met by Ealing Council's financial commitment

7.4 Requests for major adaptations will not be approved where a Right-to-buy application has been received. Tenants in these cases will be signposted to the assistance available through the council's DFG program once they have purchased their council home.

8. Letting adapted homes

8.1 Adapted properties that become available will be offered to those with matching needs or similar needs.

8.2 If a person requiring adaptations applies to join the housing register, they may, after being assessed by an OT, be granted priority banding for any suitable adapted properties.

8.3 If a tenant no longer requiring adaptations would prefer to move from an adapted property to an un-adapted home, the

council will consider this if it has someone else who needs that type of adapted home.

9. **Managing risk**

- 9.1 We will make sure any tenant moving into an already adapted home is referred to an OT who will assess the new homes suitability.
- 9.2 We will make sure we add all disabled adaptations with an electrical and/or mechanical element to our servicing contracts. This will ensure the equipment is maintained and remains safe to use.

10. **Resident engagement**

- 10.1 We have consulted with our residents in developing this policy for aids and adaptations in the homes of secure council tenants.
- 10.2 For those residents that require a major disabled adaptation we will keep them informed of the progress of their application and where possible give them choices for things like the colour of non-slip flooring in wet rooms.
- 10.3 We will be honest with residents and occupational therapists to manage expectations. From time to time, it may be necessary to reconsider the scale of the work due to budgets.

11. Contractor engagement

- 11.1 Ealing Council will only use contractors that have been through a robust procurement process.
- 11.2 We have a legal duty to share our asbestos register with our contractors. They are required to refer to our asbestos register before they carry out any aids and adaptations in our homes.
- 11.3 We will meet with our contractors at least monthly to review performance.

12. Equality and diversity

- 12.1 Ealing Council recognises that it provides accommodation services for communities which include wide social diversity and is committed to providing equal access to services.
- 12.2 The aids and adaptations process aims to treat all residents fairly, with respect and professionalism, regardless of their gender, race, religion, pregnancy status, age, disability, sexual orientation and marital status.

12.3 This policy has been designed to be fully inclusive, regardless of protected characteristics and an equality impact assessment has been completed to inform this policy.

13. Monitoring & review

13.1 For monitoring purposes, all applicants for disabled adaptations will be asked to provide details of their gender, age, religion, disability, ethnicity, marital status and sexual orientation in line with the protected characteristics identified within the Equalities Act 2010.

13.2 We will monitor this policy in a number of ways. This includes reports and analysis of requests, adaptations completed, referrals to Occupational Therapists, types of adaptations undertaken and the cost and time to complete. We will also ask for feedback from stakeholders to help us improve our service.

14. Legal and Regulatory framework

- Equalities Act 2010
- The Care Act 2014
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Regulator of Social Housing – Safety and Quality Standard 2024

15. Associated policies

- Allocations

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT



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- Tenancy
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