

Property Policies & Procedures



Aids & Adaptations Policy

1.	Policy objective
1.1	This Policy provides a framework for delivering Aids and Adaptations (A&A) in our homes.
1.2	The Policy objectives are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of our customers' lives and those of their dependents; • Set out clear criteria for circumstances where Watford Community Housing (WCH) will adapt properties; and • Maximise funding opportunities through the local authorities.
1.3	This Policy should be considered in conjunction with the Aids and Adaptations Guide available on Grapevine.
2.	Legislative or regulatory requirement
2.1	<u>Legislation</u>
2.1.1	Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (section 23) Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (sections 1 and 2) The Equality Act 2010 (section 3.2)
2.1.2	As a registered housing association, we are not required under statute to carry out aids or adaptation works. This is a discretionary service subject to the organisation's internal budget allocation.
2.2	<u>Regulatory</u>
2.2.1	The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) requires registered providers to comply with its Regulatory Standards including the Value for Money Standard and the Homes Standard in all aspects of its social housing activity. Paragraph 2.2.2 of the Home Standard requires registered providers to "co-operate with relevant organisations in providing an adaptations service that meets tenants' needs".
3.	Scope and definitions
3.1	This Policy applies to adaptations required to a property to accommodate either a customers' disability / need or that of one of their dependents.

3.2	The definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 is a physical or mental impairment which has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on the person's ability to do normal daily activities.
4. Policy Statement	
4.1	WCH recognises the importance of providing adaptations to allow customers to remain in their home. This however needs to be balanced against commercial considerations and our regulatory Value for Money Standard. Therefore, if major works are required, we will seek options to downsize or move customers to a more suitable property based on their needs.
4.2	WCH will not provide major adaptations where the property is under-occupied by 2 rooms or more or where an offer of alternative accommodation has been made within a 6-month time limit. We will provide a financial incentive to customers to downsize along with assistance to help move customers as part of our relocation package.
4.3	The following are types of work WCH will undertake: -
4.3.1	<p><u>Minor Adaptations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grab rails; • Lever taps; • Electronic window opener; and • Half step <p>Works will not exceed £500 including VAT.</p> <p>These will be requested through the Customer Relations Team subject to budget and the above costs.</p>
4.3.2	<p><u>Major Works</u></p> <p>WCH will not carry out any work until an Occupational Therapist (OT) has assessed the customer and identified their needs. See also section 4.3.4 below.</p> <p>Works will be capped at £10,000 per household for the life of the tenancy.</p> <p>The list of enabling adaptations which we will consider are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level access showers; • Wet rooms; • Ramps to assist with access to the property; • Hard standings where mobility issues warrant installation; • Hoists and slings; • Stair lifts; • Over bath shower; • Door thresholds and widening; • Clos-o-mats toilets; and • WC in houses within the existing curtilage of the existing property footprint (where suitable alternative accommodation has not been offered) <p>Where customers require adaptations which exceed the £10,000 cap, they will be required to apply for Disability Facilities Grant (DFG) through the local authority.</p>

4.3.3	<p><u>Structural Works</u></p> <p>We will not undertake works which involve major structural alteration to the property due to cost / financial viability e.g.: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensions to the property; or • Through-floor lifts.
4.3.4	<p><u>Occupational Therapists (OT)</u></p> <p>We will work with OTs to ascertain the extent of work required for individual customers' needs.</p> <p>We are not bound by the OT's report in terms of scope of works that exceeds our financial thresholds and we have the right to refuse works under this Policy.</p>
4.3.5	<p><u>Timescales following approval</u></p> <p>The following timescales will apply to the work (if budget is available) within the given financial year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor works - 20 working days; • Major works - WCH will work with customers to provide timeframes for all referrals by Adult Care and OT to WCH, however this will depend on the scope and complexity of the works required.
4.3.6	<p><u>Communications</u></p> <p>We will provide a dedicated contact within our Customer Relations team (CRT) who will keep the customer informed of the progression of their case.</p>
4.3.7	<p><u>Maintenance & Repair</u></p> <p>We are responsible for the repairs and maintenance of all installations carried out under the Aids & Adaptations programme, to include any associated servicing.</p>
4.3.8	<p><u>Re-letting</u></p> <p>WCH looks to meet the needs of all customers and to maximize accessibility to our homes in a way which makes the best use of our assets. We will therefore work with our local authority partners to re-let properties, which have been adapted to existing or new customers who can make best use of any adaptations whilst minimising the time the property is vacant.</p> <p>We wish to avoid increasing the void costs by removing any aid and adaptations previously installed, unless there is a health and safety risk, or the adaption possesses a significant disadvantage to the customer.</p>
4.3.9	<p><u>Customer Moves / Mutual Exchanges</u></p> <p>Customers for whom the local authority or WCH has undertaken adaptations wish to transfer or mutual exchange to another property, will be at our discretion on a case by case basis. Mutual exchanges will be refused where an exchange is for an adapted property, which does not meet the parties' needs.</p>

	<p>Each case will be reviewed individually taking into account personal circumstances and will include consultation with the customer.</p> <p>WCH may refuse to undertake adaptations to successive dwellings, unless there is an overriding need to move, for example overcrowding.</p>
4.3.10	<p><u>Independent Living / Flexicare Housing</u></p> <p>These properties will, as part of our planned maintenance programme, be fitted with level access showers as standard.</p>
4.3.11	<p><u>Recycling of Equipment</u></p> <p>We will recycle equipment such as stair lifts, which are deemed to be in satisfactory condition and reuse in other properties as required.</p>
4.3.12	<p><u>Claiming Back an Adapted Property</u></p> <p>In accordance with housing legislation, WCH have the right to claim back properties with major adaptations in the event that the person requiring the adaptation does not take up occupation or the occupants are no longer making full use of the adaptations. For example, if the property was acquired through succession or the customer making use of the adaptations found alternative accommodation.</p>
4.3.13	<p><u>Third Party Installations</u></p> <p>In the event of a major adaptation being completed in a Group owned property by a Third party, the Asset and Compliance team will require confirmation that a sufficient maintenance regime is in place.</p>
5.	Monitoring and Reporting
5.1	Monitoring of performance against the outlined measure will be monitored through the Property Services KPIs.
6.	Person Responsible
6.1	The Group Director of Partnerships is responsible overall for this Policy. Its operational delivery is the responsibility of the Asset and Building Safety Manager.
7.	Related documents
	<p>Aids and Adaptations Guide</p> <p>Surveyors Guide to Aids and Adaptations</p> <p>Lift Safety Policy & Procedure</p> <p>Responsive Repairs Policy</p> <p>Commercial Lettings Policy</p>
8.	Approval
	Approved by: EMT 8 March 2022
	Review date: February 2022
	Next review: February 2025
	Policy 'owner': Assistant Director of Property Services