

Introduction

When we build new homes, we ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that they meet the needs of older people. However, we recognise that from time to time our residents may approach us about adaptations to their homes, or our communal areas, to retain their independence and to live safely within their home.

We will comply with the Equality Act 2010 in relation to carrying out reasonable adjustments to our homes and our communal areas. When assessing reasonableness, we take account of the resources we have available to us as a small housing association.

If you have a disability or a long-term illness, we will explore the possibility of carrying out reasonable adjustments either directly, or through your local authority, so that you can remain living in your home. Alternatively, where we feel reasonable adjustments are not suitable, we will discuss the option of moving to one of our homes that better suits your needs.

Please remember that you must always get our permission before carrying out any alterations to your home. We will not unreasonably refuse our consent but where we do, we will explain our reasons in writing. Any permission will set out what we expect in respect of the quality of the work and any requirements to remove on end of tenancy.

What is an aid or adaptation?

Adaptations are additions or alterations to your property, designed to help you live independently and to prevent or prolong the need for you to move. We will maintain adaptations or equipment once installed if provided by LACE, or through a DFG.

We do not provide portable equipment such as commodes, shower seats, walking frames, or anything fitted to personal possessions e.g. bed rails, bed hoists, chair seat raisers. These items can usually be arranged through Social Services.

Minor adaptations

We class minor adaptations as those costing less than £250 to install and includes items such as:

- Replacement of our standard taps with lever taps.
- Replacement of our standard door handles with adapted handles.
- Additional locks to doors or windows.
- Installation of grab rails.
- Vibrating pillows (in conjunction with the Fire and Rescue Service).
- Flashing doorbells.
- Door intercom systems.

In the absence of alternative funding, we can provide and pay for minor adaptations to your property without the need for an assessment by an occupational therapist. We may seek advice or guidance from your occupational therapist to confirm that any aid or adaptation will meet your specific needs and requirements.

We will seek assistance from charitable organisations and other organisations such as the Fire and Rescue Service who may offer auxiliary aids for free.

We will complete agreed minor adaptations within 28 days of your first contact with us.

Major adaptations

Major adaptations are structural changes or alterations which cost more than £250, normally installed through the local authority. Typical items include walk-in showers, ramps, and altering kitchen units to meet the needs of a wheelchair user.

If you think you require a major adaptation, please contact us. We will be able to provide you with the details of your local occupational therapist to arrange a needs assessment. We can also provide information on how to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant, which may cover the cost of the adaptation.

What is the law in respect of adaptations?

The following legislation applies to requests for adaptations:

- **Part M: Building Regulations**
- **Equality Act 2010** (Section 36(1) (a), Paragraph 2, Schedule 4, and Section 190) – A landlord may have to make reasonable adjustments in response to a request from a disabled tenant living in its property. Reasonable adjustments include changing how things are done (such as amending tenancy conditions) or providing an auxiliary aid. Schedule 4 provides that where a disabled person is at substantial disadvantage, compared to a non-disabled person, in the use of common parts of a landlord's residential premises, he/she will be under a duty to make a disability-related alteration to the common parts, where reasonable, at the disabled person's cost. Disabled tenants of residential properties can also apply for their landlord's consent to make improvements to their property (Section 190).

Under the Equality Act 2010 an auxiliary aid includes the replacement or provision of a sign or notice, the replacement of a tap or door handle, the replacement, provision or adaptation of a doorbell or door entry system, changes to the colour of a wall, door, or any other surface.

- **Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970** which places a duty on Social Services to assist disabled persons in obtaining suitable adaptations within their homes.
- **Part I of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996** which requires Local Authorities to help people pay for adaptations to their home, up to a maximum grant of £30,000. All grant applications are subject to a statutory means test which assesses whether and how much, the applicant must contribute towards the cost of the works.
- We also have a regulatory requirement, under the **Safety and Quality Standard**, to assist our tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services.

Can I apply for an adaptation?

This fact sheet applies to tenants who rent their home from us.

If you have bought a share of your home, you will not be eligible for minor adaptations funded by us and these will have to be self-funded or obtained through grant funding.

We will support you to find alternative funding sources, such as through charities like the Royal British Legion, or the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Family Association (SSAFA).

We will give permission for a request for adaptations provided it does not breach any terms of your lease. You must always contact us for permission before any work is carried out.

Are there any circumstances where you would not approve an adaptation?

We aim to meet the needs of our customers, but we will not normally carry out an adaptation where:

- We do not consider the property to be suitable for the intended adaptation.
- Adaptations are not reasonable or practicable for example, in terms of the cost of the adaptation and or/our available property and maintenance resources, or the proposed adaptation may have an adverse effect on other residents.
- How effective the proposed change is likely to be, i.e. there is not considered sufficient long-term benefit of the works because it is considered likely that you will need to, or wish to, move to alternative accommodation within the foreseeable future in order to meet your longer-term housing and care needs.
- The type and length of the tenancy.
- The adaptation will incur unreasonable service charges for wider residents of the scheme.
- The proposed adaptation may affect the ability to let the property in the future.

Should we refuse a request we will explain our reasons and offer you the right to appeal our decision under our aids and adaptations policy.