

Aids and Adaptations Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out our approach to requests for aids and adaptations.
- 1.2 If a resident has problems getting around their home/building, we may be able to make some adaptations which would make it easier for them. We recognise the benefits that adaptations can bring by enabling residents to remain independent and living in their own home.
- 1.3 This policy has links to some of our other policies, and we've thought about these links when reviewing the policy. Other relevant policies include:
 - Tenant's Right to Make Improvements
 - Responsive Repairs
 - Reasonable Adjustments
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
 - Lettings
 - Rehousing
 - Voids

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers all Peabody Group residents, except for Town & Country Housing.
- 2.2 This policy applies to general needs, affordable rent, and directly managed supported and sheltered housing tenants. It does not apply to leaseholders, freeholders, shared owners, intermediate market or market rent residents.
- 2.3 The aims of this policy are to ensure that:
 - We assist residents, where possible, to remain in their own homes and communities through the provision of aids and adaptations.
 - Aids and adaptations are completed to the specifications included in an Occupational Therapist assessment.
 - Residents applying for aids and adaptations are treated in a fair and equitable way.

3. Key terms and definitions

- 3.1 **Aids and adaptations** are alterations or improvements carried out to a resident with a disability's home or communal area to enable them to continue to carry out day to day activities. This does not include responsive repairs or improvements that fall under the Tenant's Right to Make Improvements Policy. Adaptations are categorised as:
 - **Minor adaptations** costing up to £2,000 including, but not limited to, internal door threshold ramps, lever taps, grab rails, moving door handles and power sockets.
 - **Major adaptations** costing over £2,000 including, but not limited to, provision of lifting aids, stair lift installation, level-access showers and installation of a wet room.

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- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 **Occupational therapists (OT)** are health care professionals. Following receipt of a referral, the OT will carry out an assessment of the need for aids and adaptations in the resident's home. If an independent occupational therapist is used by us, they must be State Registered by the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine and listed in the current Directory of Private Practitioners, produced by the College of Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapists in Private Practice.
- 3.4 The **Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)** is a means tested grant provided by Local Authorities to cover the cost of providing adaptations and access to essential facilities that enable a disabled person to continue living at their property. The local authority must be satisfied that the adaptation is "necessary and appropriate" to meet the person's needs and that the works are reasonable and can be done with regard to the age and condition of the property.
- 3.5 A **Home Improvement Agency (HIA)** provides a range of services to help older people, people with disabilities and vulnerable people live safely and independently in their homes. This can include home visits to offer advice about changes to the property or liaising with the council or Occupational Therapist to complete aids and adaptations.
- 3.6 The **defect liability period** is the period following practical completion of a new development where the building contractor is responsible for dealing with identified defects.

4. Our approach

- 4.1 We often complete specialist works in supported and sheltered housing accommodation prior to sign-up when we house residents through the 'transforming care programme'. We undertake OT assessments within the proposed new property to understand the incoming resident's needs.
- 4.2 We are not responsible for installing or maintaining aids and adaptations where an application for outright sale (Right to Buy or Right to Acquire) is currently live.

Minor adaptations

- 4.3 Requests for minor adaptations may be received by residents, relatives, friends, carers, occupational therapists, hospital or clinical doctors, GPs, other specialists such as caseworkers, Peabody colleagues, and social workers.
- 4.4 We aim to provide a fully funded fast-track service for minor pre-approved adaptations for residents and to complete these within 30 working days of approving a request. In extenuating circumstances that set back this timescale, we maintain open communication with the resident, provide regular updates, and do our best to complete the work as soon as possible.
- 4.5 Where relevant, requests for minor adaptations may need to be supported by appropriate evidence, such as a letter from a medical practitioner.

Major adaptations

- 4.6 We only accept requests for major adaptations that have been assessed and recommended by an occupational therapist (OT).
- 4.7 We only accept referrals for major adaptations from social services.

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- 4.8 For all major aids and adaptations, we ask residents to apply to their local authority for a DFG to cover the cost of the aids and adaptations. Where reasonable, we may offer assistance in making the application and work with the local authority to achieve the best solution for the resident.
- 4.9 If the local authority fails to award a DFG, or the grant they allocate results in a shortfall, we may consider fund-matching or funding the whole cost of a major adaptation to a property if an OT assessment has been made. For major adaptations that cost more than £10,000, a cross-departmental meeting is held with all relevant internal and external agencies to discuss the best course of action. For those who don't meet grant criteria, we may explore splitting the funding or forming joint agreements with external agencies.

Internal transfers

- 4.10 As an alternative to installing major aids and adaptations, a resident can apply for an internal transfer to a more suitable property.
- 4.11 At our discretion, we may choose to move a resident to a specifically adapted property to meet their needs rather than adapting their current home.

Asset management and record keeping

- 4.12 We maintain accurate and up-to-date asset management data with relevant information about major aids and adaptations. These details are available to inform the management of allocations and lettings, and the maintenance of the adaptation itself.

Inspection and repairs

- 4.13 We aim to inspect all major aids and adaptations costing over £2,000. Where a completion inspection has not occurred, we contact the resident so that any defects can be reported.
- 4.14 We carry out repairs to aids and adaptations equipment, except where a defect liability period still applies.
- 4.15 We maintain the adaptations fitted in our properties after the warranty period. A charge may be applied to cover the cost of servicing equipment, e.g., with stair lifts.

Retaining and utilising adaptations

- 4.16 We retain minor adaptations and major adaptations, such as permanent ramps and wet rooms, when an adapted property is vacated and becomes void. We only remove aids and adaptations if they are beyond economical repair.
- 4.17 Major adaptations, where funded/part funded by a local authority, must remain in place for a (minimum) five-year period, unless the resident passes away.

Declining requests and temporary adaptations

- 4.18 We decline requests for making aids and adaptations where we believe that this is not an effective use of resources or best value for money. For example, where it is not physically possible to alter the property in the requested way, the aid/adaption would involve big structural works or if an adaptation would present a health and safety risk. In this situation, we work with the resident and, where appropriate, their occupational therapist to consider other options such as suitable alternative accommodation. The OT may provide a rehousing report to support this process.

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4.19 Our decisions are based on individual needs and circumstances. We make decisions at our discretion to do what is best for the resident, and try to reach an agreement and/or compromise that will satisfy the resident.

4.20 We do not carry out temporary aids and adaptations.

Communal Areas

4.21 Requests for adaptations in communal areas are considered on a case-by-case basis and all affected residents are consulted with.

4.22 In supported housing, communal areas can include essential shared living facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms, that could have a greater impact on other residents. This is taken into account when considering aids and adaptations.

Customer satisfaction

4.23 We measure the success of this policy by undertaking satisfaction surveys of all completed aids and adaptation works.

4.24 Residents who receive aids and adaptation work are given a personalisation or satisfaction survey; the results of which are monitored and reported monthly.

5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

5.1 We monitor access to the service provided under this policy to ensure equality and use the results to improve the service and to inform budgetary changes.

5.2 All requests from residents to accommodate their needs are considered and acted on, where possible, in accordance with our Reasonable Adjustments Policy and the Equality Act 2010. You can request a reasonable adjustment from us through the officer you are engaging with, or by contacting our Customer Hub. Examples of the support we can provide include providing information in alternative formats and adapting our communication method.

5.3 This policy aligns with our wider Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy by supporting the vulnerable, creating places where people want to live and building resilience in people and communities.

6. Legislation and Regulation

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- European Commission Human Rights Act 1998
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Building Safety Act 2022

6.1 We liaise with local authorities and consult best practice to ensure that this policy is kept in line with current requirements and takes account of any legislative changes.

7. Responsibilities

7.1 The Director of Repairs has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

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Approval

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Effective from	<i>03/04/2023</i>
Policy owner	Director of Repairs