

AIDS & ADAPTATION PROCEDURE

Statement

This document sets out the steps to be taken to deal effectively and consistently with requests for Aids and Adaptations for our elderly or disabled tenants and their family.

1.0 Purpose

To establish the aims and objectives that will be pursued and the principles, values and constraints that will be applied in relation to the provision of aids and adaptation to tenants of Arhag Housing Association.

This procedure will provide guidance to staff responsible for handling Aids and adaptation queries and request from Tenants of Arhag Housing Association.

2.0 Scope

This procedure applies to all request and queries relating to aids and adaptations received from Arhag tenants.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Disabled Adaptation

3.1.1 For the purpose of this procedure, the definition of a 'disabled adaptation' is an alteration or addition to any aspect of a dwelling to make it easier or safer for use by a disabled person.

3.1.2 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a person as disabled if they have:

- a mental or physical impairment, and:
- *this has an adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-today activities,*
- the adverse effect is substantial, and:

- *the adverse effect is long term (meaning it has lasted for 12 months or is likely to last for more than 12 months or for the rest of the person's life.)*
- A person with a progressive condition, which will affect the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities in the future, is classed as disabled.

At least one of these areas must be badly affected:

- mobility
- manual dexterity
- physical co-ordination
- continence
- ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects
- speech, hearing or eyesight
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- understanding of the risk of physical danger

3.2 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

Disabled Facilities Grant is a local council grant to help towards the cost of adapting a tenant's home to enable them to continue to live there. A grant is paid when the council considers that changes are necessary to meet a tenant's needs and is happy that the work is reasonable and practical. Eligibility to a DFG application by the tenant is means tested. It is also possible to make a landlord's application for DFG. This is not means tested.

4.0 Responsibility

4.1 Head of Asset Management;

- Is responsible for setting and managing the annual budget for aids and adaptation works.
- Is responsible for the implementation of the aids and adaptation policy and procedure

4.2 Head of Housing;

- Is responsible for matters relating to re-housing
- Is responsible for actions and performance of the Housing Officers

4.3 Housing Officers;

- Is responsible for assisting tenants with their applications for DFG grants.
- Is responsible for reporting any request received for aids and adaptation works from tenants to Asset Management Department.

4.4 Building Surveyors;

- Is responsible for processing aids and adaptation requests received by Arhag.

4.5 Senior Customer Care Administrator

- is responsible for logging aids and adaptation request on the aids and adaptation database
- Is responsible for requesting and processing aids and adaptation works satisfaction surveys.

5.0 Guidance Notes

5.1 Funding

5.1.1 Head of Asset Management to set an annual aids and adaptations budget. Arhag will spend up to the maximum authorised budget each financial year. Spend against budget will be monitored and the budget reviewed as necessary. In addition, grant applications are made to the Local Authority for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) before carrying out the works. This ensures that the maximum possible number of adaptations can be carried out.

5.1.2 Ensure that the availability of medical aids and adaptations is actively promoted to our tenants and that good quality advice and guidance on the provision of such works, including the options available to them and the likely timescale for completion of the works, is available to them.

- 5.1.3 Install minor aids and adaptations up to the value of circa £250 without the recommendation of an Occupational Therapist, where there is a clear and pressing need for such work and at the discretion of the Head of Asset Management. This is in line with the Housing Corporation and College of Occupational Therapists good practice guidance 'Minor adaptations without delay'
- 5.1.4 Install aids and adaptations over the value of £250 only on the recommendation of a qualified Occupational Therapist.

6.1 Application

- 6.1.1 Any tenant who has difficulties using his or her home may request that it be adapted at any time. He or she will not be expected to make a financial contribution towards the cost of the work and no means-testing will be carried out. If the work requested is extensive, a clinical assessment of need must be carried out by a qualified Occupational Therapist and a recommendation made by him or her before the Association will consider it.
- 6.1.2 We take a user-centred approach to providing adaptations in our properties, recognising that they are not simply a matter of installing equipment or doing building work, but are about people and how their living environment disables them. Adaptations are undertaken in partnership with users. It is our aim to involve them at each stage of the process and to respect their input, whether the disabled person is the tenant or is another member of the tenant's household.
- 6.1.3 It is important to remember, however, that we have an obligation to other tenants and to customers waiting for properties to make the best use of our housing stock and of the finite resources available for adaptation work.
- 6.1.4 Requests will be refused if they do not meet the criteria outlined at the end of this document and may also be refused or a decision delayed if demand for adaptations mean funding has been largely or entirely committed for the financial year.

6.2 Prioritisation

- 6.2.1 If there are competing demands for limited funding, even within the categories outlined at the end of this document, cases recommended as urgent by Occupational Therapists will be prioritised first.

- 6.2.2 If funds are becoming exhausted, the Association will make best use of the remaining budget by carrying out only those adaptations without which the disabled person would no longer be able to continue living at home. The onus will be on the disabled person or his/her representative to provide evidence that this is the case if s/he wishes to challenge the Association's decision.
- 6.2.3 Adaptations will be carried out in date order of being approved and will generally be completed within 3 months of a decision being made. When funds are low, it may occasionally become necessary to hold approval of cases considered urgent, but which do not prevent the person continuing to live at home, until the commencement of the following financial year.

6.3 Re-housing

- 6.3.1 In some cases, alternatives to adaptation will be discussed with the user, the most common being re-housing. This will only be considered where the cost of the adaptation is excessive or the users long-term needs indicate that the property will continue to be largely unsuitable to his or her requirements, even if the adaptation helps in the short term.
- 6.3.2 At this point, the needs of other members of the household will be taken into consideration, as well as those of the disabled person. If it is acknowledged by us that someone requires adaptations but we are unable to provide them, we will prioritise that person's application for re-housing to a more suitable property.
- 6.3.3 Such cases will be continually monitored and reviewed to ensure that users do not have to wait for excessive periods of time before suitable alternative accommodation becomes available. During this period both the user and the Occupational Therapist will be kept updated on the situation.
- 6.3.4 As adaptations tend to be done to meet the very specific requirements of an individual user, it is not always straightforward to find a new tenant who can move straight into a property once s/he leaves.
- 6.3.5 In order to minimise the amount of money we have to spend on adapting properties, we try to avoid having to reinstate them to their original state when a user moves out by finding new tenants who can make the best use of adapted properties, wherever possible.

6.3.6 Although we do award “points” to applicants who have medical problems and additional management moves “points” to people requiring adaptations, this still sometimes means that we let adapted properties to people who are not at the top of our waiting list, if they need the particular adaptations which are already present in an empty property.

6.4 Customer Satisfaction Survey

6.4.1 A satisfaction survey should be carried out by the Senior Customer Care Administrator following every completed adaptation.

The intention of carrying out this survey is to assess and determine:

- which parts of the process have gone smoothly
- what areas have been problematic,
- where residents would have liked to be more involved
- tenant satisfaction with the standard of work

ARHAG will use these responses to inform changes in procedure.

6.5 Guidelines for Approving Request for Property Adaptation

6.5.1 Considerations

In considering whether to carry out adaptations we will give the highest priority to cases which are considered urgent by the Occupational Therapists. We will then prioritise commonly requested adaptations, which are likely to be of long-term benefit to existing or future tenants, in properties which will continue to be let to people who will benefit from the work carried out.

Budget restrictions may mean that even urgent adaptations are refused and/or decisions delayed if funds are not available to carry them out.

6.5.2 Arriving at a Decision

Decisions will take account of the following factors:

- a) The degree of urgency indicated by the Occupational Therapist
- b) Existing adaptations carried out at the property
- c) The property layout and what is technically possible
- d) The user’s longer term needs and those of his/her household

- e) The availability of suitable alternative accommodation
- f) The best use of the housing stock
- g) The cost of the works requested

6.6 Specific Association Policies

- a) We will not provide within-curtledge parking unless parking restrictions operate immediately outside the property.
- b) Where a property has more than one access point, we will adapt only one entrance.
- c) We will not provide external landscaping to properties unless the work is essential for access to the building.
- d) We will carry out only the most minor of adaptations (such as the provision of additional sockets or the removal of radiators) to facilitate storage and recharging of electric scooters. More extensive works must be financed by the user.
- e) We will carry out only the most minor of adaptations (such as additional banister rails, grab rails, window openers and lever taps) in a larger, two storey property, if a user is under-occupying it and more suitable alternative accommodation is available.
- f) We will provide extensive adaptations to larger, two storey properties (by installing lifts, building ground floor extensions, replacing upstairs baths with showers, installing adapted kitchens, etc.) only where we are replacing existing obsolete models or where a user's household is likely to continue to fully occupy the whole of the property for the foreseeable future and suitable alternative accommodation is not available.

7.0 Records

Description	Where Kept	How Long
Tenant's request for aid and adaptation works	Tenancy file	End of Tenancy
Occupational therapist report	Tenancy file	End tenancy
Report confirming details of works to be carried out or actually carried out	Property File	Indefinitely
Statutory consents	Property File	Indefinitely

8.0 Last Reviewed

Date procedure last updated or reviewed. April 2008