

Disability and Adaptations Assistance Policy

Introduction

This policy applies to customers living in our social housing properties who require aids and adaptations within their home. The primary aim of the policy is to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity. Separate procedures are in place to support the implementation of this policy which in turn, informs the Strategic Asset Management Strategy.

Policy statement

Adaptations are carried out under the provisions of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and the Social Housing Regulator's Regulatory Code and Guidance requires that our customers who have special needs must be supported to obtain the facilities and services they need.

Grand Union Housing Group will, therefore, help customers (and permanent members of their household) with disabilities in the following ways:

- Relocate to more suitable accommodation. This will be considered where it may be the best available option to meet a customer's needs and follows discussion/liaison with the management team, in complex cases, and the customers(s) concerned giving their approval. Any customer requiring a complex adaptation will be required to join the transfer or housing register to enable nomination to more suitable properties if they arise before works commence. Any incentives offered by us will also be discussed.
- Provide landlord approval to allow the local authority Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) works to be carried out.
- Provide financial assistance from the relevant subsidiary budget following an occupational therapist's (OT) assessment for minor adaptations, and provide support to access finances for major adaptations.
- Maintain and develop a multi-agency approach through our current, local authority, partnership arrangements to ensure that adaptations are managed in a corporate and efficient manner. We will also adopt the principles of this policy should there be a need to work with any other local authorities during the lifetime of this policy.
Where the adaptations are of a relatively minor nature, for example, key safes, retrospective notification may be more appropriate in accordance with the guidance given by the College of Occupational Therapists in their document "*Minor adaptations without delay*".

Objectives

The policy aims to meet the following objectives:

- To set out our position with regard to minor and major adaptations.
- To ensure that the adaptations process is managed effectively.

- To ensure that the needs of disabled customers are prioritised and met accordingly, in an effective and timely manner, subject to the provision of available funding. This is not a duty but is seen as good practice.
- To maximise all local authority grants and alternative resources for adaptations, having regard to value for money at all times.
- To ensure that there are clear channels of communication and established joint working practices with our partners from the local authorities in the areas in which we operate.
- To ensure that Grand Union meets its obligations under the Disability Equality Duty (DED) 2006, the Disability Discrimination (Premises) Act 2006 and the Equality Act 2010.
- To ensure compliance with the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and the Care Act 2014.

Other related policies/documents

Allocations Policy
 CBC Allocations Policy – Choice Based Lettings
 Compensation Procedure
 Complaints Policy
 Equality, Diversity and Customer Care Policy
 Fresh Start Scheme Procedure
 Planned Maintenance and Improvement Policy
 Repairs and Maintenance Policy
 Strategic Asset Management Strategy
 Tenancy Agreement

Legal and regulatory framework

The legislation relevant to the Disability and Adaptations Assistance Policy is:

- The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 – this requires Social Services to assist people with disabilities to obtain aids and adaptations to make their home suitable for their needs.
- The Housing Grants and Regeneration Act 1996 – provides for Disabled Facilities Grants, subject to the applicant’s resources, to be made available from local authorities, for carrying out ‘works that are necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of a disabled occupant, provided that it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the works having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling’. Subject to means testing, DFGs, up to a maximum current limit of £30,000, are available for specified adaptations but local authorities also have powers to make discretionary grants above this threshold.

Major and minor adaptations

Adaptations are split into two categories – major and minor. These distinctions are based on the nature of the work required in order to implement the adaptation and do not correspond to the impact that it will have on the individual. It is understood that both major and minor works can impact significantly on the individual’s quality of life.

Minor adaptations

Minor adaptations will usually be funded by Grand Union and include works such as grab rails, lever taps, stair rails, galvanised rails, seating in shower areas and improved access.

Major adaptations

Major adaptations are those that require more extensive works such as level access showers, access alterations, stair lifts, ramps and bathroom and kitchen conversions.

Palliation care including terminal illness and end of life care

Where Grand Union receives evidence of a DS1500 medical condition report from a GP, medical consultant or Macmillan healthcare professional advising us of a life limiting illness, consideration will be made to provide customers with support in their home. Funding will be assessed to provide temporary equipment for the purposes of ensuring adequate access and egress around the property and for the assistance of care staff.

Customers with supportive care requirements will be added to the list and consideration for those needs will be subject to a feasibility assessment on the property layout and design and that it meets the reasonable and practicable assessment criteria.

Grand Union will be committed to providing minor works and help during this stressful time for the customer and their family. We will aim to provide ground floor living space for customers who need end of life care. We will help customers to be as comfortable as possible and to be able to remain at home for as long as possible.

Rent and service charge implications

The weekly rent of a property will only be increased following a major adaptation if the work has resulted in property enhancements in line with our rent setting criteria, that is, the number of rooms has increased or heating is extended from partial to full.

Future transfers

Customers for whom Grand Union has undertaken adaptations will have the same rights as other customers to transfer to another Grand Union property. We will, however, advise customers that we may refuse to carry out adaptations to successive properties unless there is an overriding need to move, for example, overcrowding. Customers who receive help from a local authority DFG may be asked to certify their intention to continue to reside in the adapted property for a specified period following the date when the works are completed.

Landlord refusal to provide major adaptations

Grand Union reserves the right to refuse major adaptations for any of the following reasons:

- The adaptation is not suitable to the type of property.
- It would affect communal areas.
- It would extend beyond the curtilage of the property.
- The customer has applied to purchase the property under the Right to Buy.
- The customer has an active transfer application for re-housing.
- The customer is subject to an order of the court or on-going court proceeding relating to their tenancy (e.g. rent arrears or anti-social behaviour).
- The customer is refusing to move to a more suitable property previously identified.
- The adaptation is not reasonable and practicable and moving the customer to more appropriate accommodation is recommended. The decision will be made by the Operational Leadership team but only after consultation with the customer(s) concerned.
Customer refuses to apply for a DFG, or to meet their contribution, this will affect the ability to provide the adaptation.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed as part of the on-going policy review programme.

Person responsible for review:	Head of Procurement and Contract Management
Supported by:	Accessibility & Special Projects Manager
Ratified by:	Leadership team 27 April 2021
Date policy reviewed:	April 2021
Date of next review:	April 2024