

EQUIPMENT AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY

2019 - 2022

Document control

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Author	Business Manager - Assets
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Version	Date	Author(s)	Notes on Revisions
1	March 15	Head of Client Services	Conversion of existing policy into current template and track future revisions from this point forward
2	January 18	Manager Adaptations	Review of policy
3	March 19	Business Manager - Assets	Changed to reflect arrangement put in place with KMBC.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We are committed to meeting the needs of its customers for independence, privacy and dignity. It aims to help people continue to live independently and comfortably in their homes for as long as possible with the minimum intrusion. This includes meeting the needs of children who live in Livv Housing Group homes and supporting those with caring responsibilities.
- 1.2 The statutory responsibility for funding adaptations is the duty of the local authority. Tenants of Livv Housing Group have a right to consideration for disabled facilities under the following legislation full details of which can be found at the Office of Public Sector Information on www.opsi.gov.uk:
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
 - Disabled Persons Consultation and Representation Act 1970
 - The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (Part 1)
- 1.3 The service to disabled people is provided through a partnership agreement between Livv Housing Group and Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC). KMBC will provide Occupational Therapy services, select contractors and oversee all major adaptation works while Livv Housing Group will jointly fund the adaptations in the area. A budget for disabled adaptations will be allocated each year and other funding options will be sought in order to ensure that the maximum possible number of adaptations can be carried out.
- 1.4 Funding for major adaptations will generally be made up of 50% Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and a 50% contribution from Livv Housing Group. DFG funding is means tested and, if a tenant does not qualify for grant funding, Livv Housing Group have the following options to consider:
- 1.4.1 Pay 100% of the cost of the adaptation
 - 1.4.2 Still pay a 50% contribution with the tenant paying the other 50%
 - 1.4.3 Consent to the works but not make any contributory funding with the tenant paying 100% of the cost.
- Any major adaptations that do not qualify for DFG funding will be reviewed on an individual basis.
- 1.5 All requirements for minor adaptations will be referred from KMBC to the Livv Maintenance. This work will be 100% funded by Livv Housing Group.
- 1.6 Livv Housing Group recognises that adaptations for the disabled are the Council's responsibility, however, from time to time the Board will evaluate total needs and demand and review the contribution that we are able to make in supporting our disabled customers. Livv Housing Group recognises that whilst all support provided for equipment and adaptations by ourselves is beyond our area of responsibility, Livv Housing Group is meeting the needs of our most vulnerable residents.

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1.6 Based on the Council's Housing Needs Survey (2007) and the evidence of cases referred to Livv Housing Group, demand for adaptations is rising and will continue to do so. Key findings of the survey included:

- An additional 10,100 people aged 45 to 65 plus by 2029
- 55.9% of all household members were over 60, including 25% over 75

The local evidence is supported by the national picture as follows:

- 48% of new households will be over 65 by 2041
- The number of disabled people will double to 4.6 million by 2041
- 49% of social housing tenants are reported as having a disability

1.7 Although the demand for adaptations comes mainly from older people the needs of disabled people of all ages, including children, are also significant. The Housing Needs Survey indicated:

- 36.3% of households contain someone with a disability (22,293 households implied)

1.8 These figures clearly reflect the level of need for adaptations but also indicate increased expectations by customers who are now more aware of the range of equipment and adaptations available and their entitlement to these.

1.7 Livv Housing Group will seek to improve its customer's awareness of the Equipment and Adaptations service so that nobody who is in need will be un-informed.

1.8 This policy is part of Livv Housing Group's wider strategic planning framework.

2 What are Disabled Adaptations?

2.1 Disabled adaptations comprise of specialist equipment, extra fittings or minor alterations to enable vulnerable people and their families to overcome difficulties in the home and make them more suitable for their needs.

2.2 The purpose of an adaptation is to restore independence, privacy, confidence and dignity to individuals. Adaptations should give individuals the ability to be in control of their own lives.

2.3 The adaptations provided will also assist those who have caring responsibilities to be better able to cope.

3 Policy Statement

3.1 Livv Housing Group's tenants have the right to be considered for disabled adaptations under the legislation referred to at paragraph 1.2 of this policy. Responsibility for applying this legislation rests with the local authority. Livv Housing Group will seek to work in partnership with the local authority and other relevant agencies to meet the needs of its customers for disabled adaptations.

3.2 Livv Housing Group will publicise its Equipment and Adaptations service as widely as possible and will seek to raise awareness of the support available to disabled people living within its stock to enable them to live as independently as possible. Livv Housing Group will actively encourage applications for adaptations from its customers. Access to the service will be via a number of different means (e.g. telephone, email, website, front counter). All adaptations will be requested via KMBC.

- 3.3 An annual budget will be identified which will be used as efficiently as possible to benefit the maximum number of people. Consequently financial limits will be applied to ensure this is achieved. Joint funding alongside the local authority and additional external funding through charitable bodies will also be sought.
- 3.4 Priority for support will be based on medical need as assessed by KMBC's Occupational Therapy team using the Fair Access to Care model.
- 3.5 Performance of the service will be measured against the targets set out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Section 4 of this policy provides further details.
- 3.6 Minor adaptations will be provided in accordance with the *Minor adaptations without delay (2006)* guidance document published by the College of Occupational Therapists.

4 Implementation

Livv Housing Group will aim to complete adaptations in the timescales stated in this section subject to budgetary constraints and any external factors that may impact the delivery of the service.

4.1 Minor Adaptations

- Minor adaptations can be provided where a person is having difficulty in performing tasks essential for daily living or where mobility within the home is restricted. These works will be assessed immediately and completed within 28 days of application.
- Minor adaptations include the provision of lever taps, handrails and grab rails.
- Minor Adaptations are provided by Livv Housing Group via Livv Maintenance.

4.2 Major Adaptations

Applications for major adaptations will be further categorised as Critical or Non Critical following an Occupational Therapist's assessment as follows:

Priority 1 - Critical Requests

- People in extensive need and unable to live independently in their own home. Works under this category may include stair lifts, bathing adaptations or works to improve access.
- Completion within: 80 Days (Working), 115 Days (Calendar)

Priority 2 – Non-Critical Requests

- People who develop difficulties that will compromise their safety at home and have a detrimental affect to their health. Works under this category may include for example level access showers or ramps.
- Completion within: 230 Days (Working), 322 Days (Calendar)

- 4.3 Where the need for adaptations is to be met through an extensive and time-consuming solution such as the building of an extension these targets will not be applicable although every effort will be made to complete the process as quickly as possible.

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- 4.4 Quality inspections will be carried out while works are ongoing and through post-inspections. This inspection will be completed by Livv Maintenance on behalf of Livv Housing Group.

5 Assessing for Adaptations

- 5.1 The majority of requests for major adaptations will be considered on the recommendation of a community or hospital Occupational Therapist or similar professional after carrying out an assessment of needs using the Fair Access to Care model in order to ensure transparency. Where a minor adaptation is required (e.g. fitting lever handles to doors / fitting lever operated taps / grab rails etc.) assessment can be carried out by trained staff over the telephone in line with the “Minor adaptations without delay” guidance published by the College of Occupational Therapists

6 Eligibility for Adaptations

- 6.1 When evaluating a request for an adaptation Livv Housing Group will consider financial, technical and other relevant factors to enable a balanced decision to be taken to ensure correct use is made of the available financial resources. Those eligible for adaptations may fall into the following categories:

- Occupants within a household including children who are permanent members of that household.
- Occupants with a proven permanent or substantial temporary disability. In circumstances where the disability is proven but not substantial, non-fixed equipment may be considered. Specialist advice will be sought on these occasions.

7 Non-Eligibility for Adaptations

Livv Housing Group will not approve KMBC to carry out any adaptation involving major structural alterations to the property or where the cost of the adaptation exceeds **£30,000** and alternative suitable accommodation has been offered and refused without reasonable cause. This limit is in-line with MHCLG guidance under the Disabled Facilities Grant programme.

- 7.2 Where the cost of an adaptation exceeds **£6000** then existing alternative adapted accommodation will be considered. This limit reflects the cost of carrying out a significant level of work to a property and where, therefore, it is reasonable to seek a more cost effective solution.
- 7.3 Where it is not technically possible due to structure or layout for example to carry out an adaptation in the property then the request for an adaptation will be declined. Livv Housing Group will, in these circumstances, pursue other suitable housing that will match the needs of the service user. In appropriate cases, financial support may be provided by Livv Housing Group to assist in moving home.

8 Suitable Alternative Housing

- 8.1 Where a request for an adaptation is refused due to non-eligibility reasons then suitable alternative housing will be considered. Such alternative housing will be a property which is

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already substantially adapted to meet the needs of the applicant and which is in a location suitable to the applicant when considering issues such as schools, transport and family support.

8.2 Alternative accommodation will be considered in-line with our Lettings Policy.

9 Best Use of Resources

9.1 Every effort will be made to ensure that all possible efficiencies are achieved and wastage is minimised so that valuable resources are maximised to the benefit of the largest number of applicants.

- a) Stair lifts
Stair lifts will be stored, refurbished and reused. The number of new stair lifts purchased will be kept to a minimum.
- b) Use of adapted property
Processes are in place to match up adapted void properties with suitable applicants from the adaptations database.
- c) Waiting list management
Applicant waiting lists will be managed by KMBC and reviewed with Livv Housing Group to ensure appropriate funds are in place for the adaptation work required.
- d) Procurement
Procurement of all contractors and suppliers will be conducted by KMBC in line with public sector procurement guidelines. All contractors currently on the KMBC framework are from in and around the Knowsley area. When services are re-procured, a representative from Livv Housing Group will be involved in the compilation of specifications and the tender process.
- e) Extensions
Recommendations for the building of expensive extensions will be thoroughly assessed and alternative solutions investigated either at the existing property or through Livv Housing Group's new build programme. Where the building of an extension is the only option, KMBC may seek additional financial support from Livv Housing Group and/or the NHS Primary Care Trust for the area.
- f) Other sources of funding
Wherever possible and appropriate, additional external funding support will be sought from statutory agencies and other charitable organizations.
- g) Maintenance
All equipment provided under the Equipment and Adaptations programme will be maintained through Livv Housing Group's Responsive and Planned Maintenance programmes. An annual programme of inspection of all stair and vertical lifts is in place.

10 Service Development

10.1 Livv Housing Group will continue to work in partnership with KMBC and other local agencies providing services to disabled people through the Centre for Independent Living.

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11 Complaints Procedure

11.1 Where a customer is dissatisfied with any aspect of Livv Housing Group’s service or implementation of this policy they will have the right to have their complaint addressed under our formal Complaints Policy.

12 Service User Feedback

12.1 Service users will be invited to complete satisfaction questionnaires following the initial presentation and assessment stage and also upon completion of the works. This will enable KMBC to monitor satisfaction with performance throughout the whole process.

13 Consultation

13.1 Consultation on this policy has been undertaken with a Customer Focus Group

14 Responsibility

14.1 The Director of Assets is responsible for effective implementation of this policy and operating effective links with KMBC.

15 Review

15.1 We will monitor the effectiveness and implementation of this policy to ensure that it achieves its aims.

15.2 Reviews of this policy will ensure it takes account of legislative changes and the development of Best Practice initiatives internally and externally so that improvements in performance can continue to be made.

Associated Documents

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Tenancy Agreement
- Tenants' Handbook
- Repairs Policy
- Lettings Policy
- Major adaptations without delay (College of Occupational Therapists)