

Equipment and Adaptations Policy

2019 – 2022

Document control

Policy approval	EDT S&BI, May 2019
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Responsible Executive Director	Executive Director – Property
Author	Business Manager – Assets
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Version	4

Version	Date of review	Details of review
1	March 15	Conversion of existing policy into current template and track future revisions from this point forward
2	January 18	Review of policy
3	March 19	Changed to reflect arrangement put in place with KMBC.
4	April 21	New format

1. Introduction

We are committed to meeting the needs of our customers for independence, privacy and dignity. We aim 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 our homes and supporting those with caring responsibilities.

The statutory responsibility for funding adaptations is the duty of the local authority. However, as per the Home Standard 2015, we are obliged to co-operate with relevant organisations to provide an adaptations service that meets tenants' needs.

Our customers 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)

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 we 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.

Funding for major adaptations will generally be made up of 50% Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and a 50% contribution from us. DFG funding is means tested and, if a tenant does not qualify for grant funding, we have the following options to consider:

- Pay 100% of the cost of the adaptation
- Still pay a 50% contribution with the tenant paying the other 50%
- 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.

All requirements for minor adaptations will be referred from KMBC to the Livv Maintenance. This work will be 100% funded by us.

We recognise 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.

2. **Scope**

The implementation and scope of the policy applies and is applicable to:

Livv Housing Group	X
Livv Homes	
Livv Maintenance	
First Ark Social Investment (Operating as Livv Investment)	
All entities	

3. **Compliance**

The policy is in place in order to support:

Regulatory Compliance, in particular the Home Standard 2015, section 2.2.2	X
Legislative Compliance, in particular	
Best Practice	

Section 2.2.2 of the Home Standard 2015 states:

- Registered providers shall co-operate with relevant organisations to provide an adaptations service that meets tenants' needs.

4. **Policy Statement**

Our customers 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. We will seek to work in partnership with the local authority and other relevant agencies to meet the needs of its customers for disabled adaptations.

We 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.

We 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.

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.

Priority for support will be based on medical need as assessed by KMBC's Occupational Therapy team using the Fair Access to Care model.

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.

Minor adaptations will be provided in accordance with the *Minor adaptations without delay (2006)* guidance document published by the College of Occupational Therapists.

Implementation

We aim to assist with completing adaptations in the timescales stated in this section subject to budgetary constraints and any external factors that may impact the delivery of the service.

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 us via Livv Maintenance.

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)

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.

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

Assessing for Adaptations

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

Eligibility for Adaptations

When evaluating a request for an adaptation, we 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.

Non-Eligibility for Adaptations

We 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.

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.

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. We 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.

Suitable Alternative Housing

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 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.

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

Best Use of Resources

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.

Stair lifts

Stair lifts will be stored, refurbished and reused. The number of new stair lifts purchased will be kept to a minimum.

Use of adapted property

Processes are in place to match up adapted void properties with suitable applicants from the adaptations database.

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.

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.

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 us and/or the NHS Primary Care Trust for the area.

Other sources of funding

Wherever possible and appropriate, additional external funding support will be sought from statutory agencies and other charitable organizations.

Maintenance

All equipment provided under the Equipment and Adaptations programme will be maintained through our Responsive and Planned Maintenance programmes. An annual programme of inspection of all stair and vertical lifts is in place.

Service Development

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

5. Policy Outcomes

The objective of this policy is to ensure that we are meeting our obligations, as a registered provider, to co-operate with relevant organisations to provide an adaptations service that meets tenants' needs.

6. Monitoring and Review

Funds will be allocated on an annual basis to jointly fund adaptations for our customers. This amount will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure we are helping meet demand.

In line with the Group's Policy Framework, this policy is scheduled to be reviewed every 3 years. Unless due to a change in Government legislation or regulatory requirements, then the review period will be brought forward in order to ensure compliance.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

The Policy Framework documents the approval routes for all Policies & Strategies, however under this policy the following teams/employees have the following responsibilities.

Executive Director's Team (EDT)	EDT have responsibility for final sign off of the policy
Director of Assets	Operational oversight of the funding of adaptations
Business Manager - Assets	Operational responsibility for the delivery of adaptations
Asset Manager	Day to day liaison with KMBC and approval point for adaptations

8. Equality & Diversity

In order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, an equality analysis (EA) was completed as part of the policy review. Upon completing the EA it was found that the implementation of the policy would support and encourage the aims

of the public sector duty. The equality analysis was completed and approved April 2019.