Aids and Adaptations Policy
**Scope of Policy**

This policy sets out Waterloo Housing Group’s approach to Aids and Adaptations via the following main routes of assistance:

- Assistance through the Group’s Aids & Adaptations service following a customer request or an assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT) and submission of a referral requesting specific Minor or Major disabled adaptations works be carried out
- Relocation to more suitable alternative accommodation. This is considered where it may be the best available option to deal with tenant’s difficulties and only with the tenant’s approval
- The Group’s approval allowing Local Authority Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) works to be carried out

**Applicability**

This Policy applies to all tenants who have rented properties that are owned by Waterloo Housing Group.

1. **Policy Statement**

1.1 Waterloo Housing Group is committed to supporting those who wish to continue to live in their homes, who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or have special needs by making any necessary alterations and adaptations as far as reasonably practicable.

1.2 Aids and adaptations are defined as items of equipment or special fixtures and fittings which may improve access to a tenant’s home, improve a tenant’s mobility in and around their home, or help with daily living.

1.3 In such circumstances the Group will review the request for an aid or adaptation and deal with it fairly and effectively.

2. **Context**

2.1 This policy relates primarily to aids and adaptations requests made by a tenant during a tenancy. Although there are no requirements for a tenant to have lived in their property for a defined period before an adaptation can be requested, the Group would in most circumstances expect that any major adaptation requests are made once a tenant has become established in their home and not at the start of their Tenancy, the property must also be the tenant’s principle home and not of a temporary nature.

The Group will only consider a request for an adaptation if the person requiring the adaptation is the tenant, their partner or a member of the immediate family who is a permanent resident in the household, or would be if the adaptation was carried out.
3. **Aims and Objectives**

3.1 The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- Applications for aids or adaptations will be considered consistently and fairly across all tenants within the Group

- The Group demonstrates its commitment to maintaining tenants independence by providing funding for minor adaptations and not unreasonably withholding permission for tenants to carry out major adaptations, where they have secured funding from other sources i.e., through the Local Authority Disabled Facilities Grant

- The Group operates a consistent approach to carrying out minor adaptations and signposting residents to other sources of potential funding from external agencies to carry out major adaptations

- All adapted properties will be recorded on a property database to ensure any future lettings are matched to an individual’s needs and make best use of stock

4. **Policy Outline**

4.1 **Aids and Equipment**

Aids (i.e. equipment) are provided by Local Authorities through their equipment loan services. The service provides equipment on loan to people who are elderly, ill or have a disability. Equipment is offered following an assessment of need which will be carried out by a recognised professional such as an Occupational Therapist/District Nurse. The type of equipment can vary, either to aid with stability or to assist with more complex work.

**Examples of aids and equipment include (list is not exhaustive):**

- Environmental Controls;
- Induction Loops;
- Connection to telephone providers;
- Shower or Commode chairs;
- Transfer boards or mats;
- Specialist WC seats;
- Specialist furniture;
- Removable bath insert.
- Stair lifts
- Ceiling tracking hoists
- Through floor lifts
- Powered and non-powered Wheel chairs and
- Specialist call systems
The Group will not meet the initial or any on-going maintenance or servicing costs of the aid or equipment. Where possible advice and support will be given to tenants to assist them in seeking an assessment from relevant agencies.

4.2 Adaptations

Adaptations are generally fixed items or alterations to the physical structure or components of a property that would assist the tenants.

The Group defines adaptations into the following two categories:

4.3 Minor Adaptations

A fixture which costs less than £500 plus VAT. The Group will fund the cost of these works directly where there is adequate budget provision at the time of application.

Minor adaptations will normally be carried out within 90 days of receiving the request and in accordance with the recommendations from an Occupational Therapist assessment which must accompany any such request.

Minor adaptations include (list is not exhaustive):

- Handrails;
- Grab Rails;
- Leaver taps to sink and;
- Internal thresholds.

4.4 Major Adaptations

In respect of major adaptation requests (those above £500 plus VAT), tenants will be advised to submit an application to the relevant Local Authority for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) or where appropriate, to other relevant external agencies for assessment etc.

DFG is the main form of assistance available from the Local Authorities to allow a person to live independently or to be cared for at home. The Grant, although mandatory and set out in sections 19-24 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, is subject to a test of financial resources.

It is the responsibility of the local authority and Occupational Therapist to assess and make any applications for funding on behalf of the tenant.

Major adaptations can only be carried out with the approval of the Group.

A request to carry out a major adaptation should be made by the tenant to the Group and include all the relevant information regarding the details of the adaptation, including the Occupational Therapy
assessment. The Group will review the request and either approve or decline applications for major adaptations within 21 days of receipt of the request.

Due to the nature of these works, the fact that the work may be conducted by an appointed party not under the control of the Group and the availability of external funding, it is not possible to give timescales for the completion of major adaptations.

4.5 **Making the best use of our stock**

To maximise resources the Group may not support a request for an adaptation where appropriate alternative accommodation has been identified, which may better suit the identified needs of the customer.

The Group reserve the right to refuse significant adaptations where:

- a reasonable alternative property is available or is likely to become available, in the near future
- when we feel the proposed works are inappropriate for the property concerned, and may devalue the asset
- the proposed adaptation may affect the ability to let this property in the future and
- any adaptation would compromise the health and safety of others.

Where consent for an adaptation is refused, the tenant can appeal to the Head of Asset Management.

4.6 **Maintenance, Repairs and Service Charges**

The Group will not carry out repairs/ maintenance or servicing of aids and adaptations and these will become the responsibility of the tenant.

When an item of equipment becomes uneconomically viable to maintain (due to age or condition) and requires replacement or renewal, tenants will be referred to the relevant Local Authority to apply for DFG funding.

5. **Equality and Diversity**

5.1 We are committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of their colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or belief, family circumstances or offending history, as referred to in our relevant Group policies. Our aim is to ensure that our policies and procedures do not create an unfair disadvantage for anyone, either directly or indirectly.

5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the policy. The assessment identified no negative impacts as a result of implementation of this policy.
6. Monitoring and Review

6.1 The Group will monitor the effectiveness of the policy and recommend policy changes to improve service delivery.

6.2 This policy will be reviewed every two years or on the introduction of new legislation or best practice guidelines, whichever is the sooner.

7. Associated Documents / Policies

7.1 List of documents / associated policies / publications :-

- Waterloo Housing Group Customer Service Standards
- Waterloo Housing Group Developing Respect Diversity Strategy 2015-18
- Lettings Policy
- Mutual Exchange Policy

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