

L&Q Aids and Adaptations Policy

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out how we support residents with disabilities or additional needs to live comfortably and independently in their home through the use of aids and adaptations.
- 1.2 It also sets our approach to installing and maintaining both minor and major adaptations.

2 Scope and Exclusions

- 2.1 This policy covers work funded by residents, through grants such as the Disabled Facilities grant or loans, or where we are able to undertake and fund certain work.
- 2.2 Permitted work and funding may depend on the type of tenure, the type of adaptation, the suitability of the property, and what other alternatives have been considered. We may also refer residents to the Residents Home Improvement Policy, which covers the need to obtain permission.

3 Legislation and Regulation

- 3.1 We aim to meet our relevant legislative and regulatory obligations and will often exceed what we are legally required to do. Those relevant to this policy include, but are not limited to:

- **The Equality Act 2010**

- The Act requires landlords to make 'reasonable' adjustments to accommodate residents who have a disability (see section 12 for further detail).

- **The Consumer Standards**

- The Regulator of Social Housing sets consumer standards, which we are expected to meet. Our policies and processes are reviewed in line with such standards. For this policy we draw particular attention to the Quality and Safety standard (see section 6 for further detail).

- **Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996**

4 Definitions

- 4.1 **Aids and Adaptations-** Alterations to a home to help residents maintain independence. They range from handrails to easier-to-use taps, assistive technology

or can be more structural like replacing a bath with a sit-down shower or a wet room or putting in a lift.

- 4.2 **Minor Adaptations-** These are to enable residents to maintain or regain the ability to live in their homes. Types of minor adaptations can include but are not limited to flashing doorbells, grab rails, internal door threshold ramps, kitchen/bathroom lever taps, window opening equipment.
- 4.3 **Major Adaptations-** These adaptations are more complex in nature, involving significant change in the fabric of the property. Types of major adaptations can include but are not limited to stair-lifts, through-floor lifts, and level-access showers/wet rooms etc.
- 4.4 **Disability-** Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is considered as having a disability if they have a physical or mental health impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long term’ negative effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- 4.5 **Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)-** Means-tested funding managed by the Local Authority for works to allow people with disabilities to make changes to their home. DFG applications assess if the works are “necessary and appropriate” and “reasonable and practical” in consideration of the age and condition of the property. The maximum DFG in England is currently £30,0000 per applicant.
- 4.6 **Lifetime Home Standard-** A set of sixteen design criteria developed to make homes more easily adaptable for lifetime use at minimal cost. It ensures that homes are inclusive, accessible, adaptable and sustainable.

5 Key Principles

- 5.1 In our approach to aids and adaptations we are committed to:
- Adapting properties where it is reasonable to do so considering how practical the adaptation will be for that property; how the work will be funded, and whether it is possible to meet the residents need in a different way. Because of this, it may not be possible to meet all requests, however we will work with the resident to help them find another solution.
 - Ensuring that all residents are treated in a fair and equitable way.
 - Responding promptly to residents’ requests and seek to carry out minor adaptations without delay.
 - Ensuring those carrying out adaptation work on our behalf provide a customer focussed service, in line with health and safety requirements, and that delivers a high level of resident satisfaction.

6 Working In Partnership

- 6.1 The Safety and Quality Standard in the Consumer Standards broadly requires us to:
- Clearly communicate to residents and relevant organisations how we will assist tenants seeking housing adaptations services.
 - Co-operate with residents, appropriate Local Authority departments, social care service, hospital discharge staff and other relevant organisations so that a housing adaptations service is provided to residents.
- 6.2 We will therefore ensure that we work in close partnership with Local Authorities and other agencies to provide an appropriate service.
- 6.3 Where we receive an instruction from an Occupational Therapist, we will work with them to understand the need of the resident and undertake the appropriate work.
- 6.4 Where we do not provide aids and adaptations, we may be able to signpost to alternative support within our partnerships, such as handyperson services. For other improvements see our Home Improvements Policy.

7 Major Adaptations

- 7.1 Major adaptations will only be undertaken based on the assessment and recommendation of an Occupational Therapist to ensure they are effective and meet the residents' specific needs.
- 7.2 Requests for major adaptations are not means tested and must be considered regardless of household income and savings.
- 7.3 Where works are fully funded through DFG, Local Authorities normally carry out the work, but we must give approval before works can commence. We must be satisfied the proposals are viable and that it is "reasonable and appropriate" to carry out the works, considering suitability of the building, therefore we encourage residents to engage with us before they apply.
- 7.4 We may need to inspect the work when in progress. On completion, the Local Authority must inform us so that there can be a handover, and we can be satisfied that the work meets our standard and that the property records are updated.
- 7.5 If a resident identifies a fault with an adaptation they should report it to us. If the adaptation is under a warranty period, the manufacturer will carry out the repair. When no longer under a warranty, we organise and carry out the repair.

8 Minor Adaptations

- 8.1 We encourage residents to inform us of any changes in their circumstances, including where they may need a minor adaptation to their home.
- 8.2 Whilst minor aids and adaptations are often requested by an Occupational Therapist (OT), we do not require an OT report to install a minor adaptation. For these requests, we will work with the resident directly but may also require information from another party such as a G.P or a specialist support service, to ensure we understand and can meet the residents' needs with an appropriate solution.

9 Reuse of Existing Adaptations

- 9.1 To make best use of the adapted homes, we record the installation of equipment or other adaptations centrally. This informs our accessible housing register.
- 9.2 Where a property has become vacant and has a larger adaptation that is still fit for purpose, we will not usually reconvert the property. Instead, at relet we aim to match up adapted homes with tenants who need them.
- 9.3 For more information on the allocation of properties, refer to our Allocations and Lettings Policy.

10 Communal Areas

- 10.1 Where it is reasonable for us to do so, we will make adjustments to a communal area to make it accessible. Requests can be made either by a resident, or by someone on their behalf. Such requests can be made, regardless of their tenure.
- 10.2 Service charges relating to the servicing and maintenance of these adaptations are charged to the block.
- 10.3 We ensure all our new-build properties are as accessible as possible by complying with existing building regulations and the Lifetime Homes Standard.

11 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 11.1 We are committed to ensuring that our residents with a disability or an additional need can live safely and comfortably in their home. This means we will provide support and help in a range of ways, including considering and making reasonable adjustments and service adjustments.
- 11.2 Under the Equality Act 2010, reasonable adjustments are changes or adaptations we make to remove barriers. They make sure that if you have a disability, you can

access our services as easily as anyone else. Making a physical alteration to our premises or residents' home can be considered a type of reasonable adjustment.

- 11.3 Adjustments only have to be made if it is reasonable to do so. Where we are unable to make a requested adjustment, we will consult with the resident, and/or those supporting them to understand their needs and preferences and involve them in the decision-making process.
- 11.4 Alternative options may include working with a resident and other Partners to find a more suitable property. Or where another property has an adaptation that could be reused.
- 11.5 For further information on how we support residents with additional needs and making reasonable adjustments, please refer to our Supporting Residents with Additional Needs Policy.

12 Policy controls sheet

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Approved by: Director of Housing Management

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Policy owned by: Director of Housing Management

Associated documents: Supporting Residents with Additional Needs Policy, Residents Home Improvement Policy, Repairs Policy

Main change	Key points
Reviewed to align with the Supporting Residents with Additional Needs Policy and Consumer Standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our responsibilities under Safety and Quality Standard.• How we provide reasonable adjustments in line with our Supporting Residents with Additional Needs Policy.
Reviewed by: The Policy Team	
Approved by: Director of Housing Management	