



Aids and Adaptations Policy

Date approved by senior management team	22 November 2018
Board of Management / Committee name	Board of Management
Approval date	20 May 2019
Implementation date	1 June 2019
Review date	June 2022
Version	Version 1

Version	Date approved	Changes
V1	20 May 2019	New Policy

1. Introduction

Langstane Housing Association's mission is to "provide homes and services that make a positive difference to people's lives".

In pursuit of this mission, the Association is committed to providing housing that meets the needs of tenants and recognises the positive impact that adapting existing homes can make to a disabled tenant's quality of life. Adaptations can contribute to a person's independence, privacy and dignity and help them to remain in their home for as long as possible.

As the general population grows older and life expectancy increases it is expected that there will be an increasing demand on the Association's adaptations service and an increasing need to be responsive and proactive to meet changing tenant needs.

2. Policy statement

This policy sets out the Association's approach to the provision of adaptations to ensure that tenants receive a person-centred service that involves them in the decision making process and ultimately aims to sustain them in their tenancy for as long as possible

3. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Help as many tenants as possible live independently in their own homes for as long as they want to
- Provide a person-centred service that involves the tenant and their family / carers in decision making about adaptations and housing options and take their views into account
- Ensure adaptations referrals are dealt with sensitively whilst being aware of the need to make the best use of the Association's housing stock
- Have clear and consistent criteria against which adaptations referrals are assessed
- Improve the speed and effectiveness of the adaptations service within the confines of the current grant funding regime
- Continuously improve the adaptations service using feedback from tenants
- Incorporate adaptations into planned maintenance works wherever possible
- Keep robust records of adapted stock to aid the future allocations process
- Comply with legal, statutory and regulatory obligations when delivering the adaptations service

4. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following LHA documents:

- Asset Management Strategy
- Equality and Diversity Strategy
- Planned and Cyclical Maintenance Policy

- Allocations Policy
- Void Management Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with accompanying procedures.

5. Types of adaptations, the referral process and funding

5.1 Minor Adaptations

A minor adaptation is a small, cost effective alteration or piece of equipment (generally under £500) which assists a person to live independently and can immediately promote wellbeing and reduce the risk of a disabled person suffering an accident in their home. Minor adaptations will include:

- Internal or external grab rails
- Changes to taps or door handles
- Changes to door entry systems, for instance additional handsets
- Additional sockets or altering the height of sockets
- Lowered thresholds at doors

In order to ensure tenants can access minor adaptations as quickly as possible, the Association provides a self-referral minor adaptations scheme and will accept referrals for certain minor adaptations directly from tenants or on behalf of tenants from family, carers, their GP or Langstane staff members. Minor adaptations which are not covered by the self-referral scheme will be considered on a case by case basis and may require an Occupational Therapists referral.

The Association will cover the cost of the self-referral scheme from the Asset Management budget but does have the option to claim grant for these adaptations where appropriate.

Minor adaptations which are not covered by the self-referral scheme will usually also be funded through the Asset Management budget unless the cost exceeds £500, in which case it will be funded through the Association's annual adaptations grant funding allocation, as outlined in Section 5.2 below.

5.2 Major Adaptations

A major adaptation is a substantial work which costs over £500 and will include the installation of fixtures or fittings and may involve alterations to physical features of a property. This will include:

- Level access or wet floor shower areas
- Kitchen alterations
- Clos-o-mat toilets
- Widening doors
- Access alterations such as ramps

Major adaptations are carried out in response to a referral from a Local Authority or NHS Occupational Therapist (OT) as their expertise is required to ensure that adaptations will meet the changing needs of the tenant. For sensory disabilities, referrals are also accepted from the North East Sensory Service. Major adaptations cannot be provided in response to referrals directly from tenants, their friends or family members, GP's, Councillors etc. However, anyone contacting the Association regarding an adaptation will be provided with information on how to access the adaptations service.

Major adaptations are funded through the Association's annual grant funding allocation from Scottish Government.

6. Circumstances where adaptations may not be progressed

The Association will endeavour to carry out adaptations referrals wherever possible. However, there are a number of eligibility criteria that must be met and there may be some circumstances where alternative solutions will be more suitable for a tenant, such as transfer to alternative accommodation.

The following are examples where adaptations referrals may not be progressed and alternative solutions may need to be found:

- The person named on the referral must be the tenant, be named on the tenancy or be a permanent household member. Adaptations work will not be carried out for lodgers, temporary visitors or for sub-lets.
- Where a tenant is actively seeking alternative accommodation an adaptation will normally not be progressed although this will be considered on a case by case basis, with the reason for wanting to move being considered
- Where there is a Notice of Proceedings (NOP) served on the property the Association will not progress with the adaptation until this has been resolved.
- Where a request for a level access shower or wet floor shower area is made for a flat at first floor level or above and there is no lift, these requests will be considered on a case by case basis taking into account:
 - Is the property accessible for the tenant in the long term?
 - Will the adaptation negatively impact the Association's ability to let the property in the future?
- Where a property is due for planned maintenance works in the near future, and the adaptation could be incorporated into these works, the adaptation may be delayed to tie in with the planned maintenance programme.
- Works will not be progressed in any property whose condition would pose a risk to the health and safety of staff or contractors. Such cases will be referred to the LHA Social Justice team and the adaptation will be progressed once the property issues have been resolved.
- Works will not be considered in properties with no utility supply due to non-payment of bills. In this circumstance the tenant will be referred to the Social Justice team and the adaptation will be progressed once the supply has been restored
- There may be some instances where the property cannot be adapted due to its construction or layout. Similarly some properties, even if adapted, will

not meet the long-term needs of the disabled person. In these instances the Association will work with the tenant to explore housing options, including the potential for identifying more suitable alternative accommodation.

- Where major reconfiguration works are requested (downstairs extension to provide sleeping accommodation or a through floor lift for instance) the Association's first preference will be to identify suitable alternative accommodation wherever possible.

Where the decision is taken not to progress the adaptation referral, the tenant and OT will be advised within 14 days of the referral being received with an explanation of why works cannot progress and any alternative action to be taken.

7. Prioritisation and waiting lists

Adaptations referrals to the Association are dealt with in a reactionary manner, as and when they are received. The referring OT will prioritise the referral as Urgent, High, Medium or Low (the exact prioritisation terms may vary between Local Authorities) but this does not influence how the Association progresses the referral until grant funding is exhausted and a waiting list is implemented. Once all of the Association's annual grant funding has been committed, a waiting list will be put in place and only Urgent adaptations will be automatically progressed until new grant funding is available. Affected tenants and their OTs will be advised when a referral is placed on the waiting list.

Waiting list referrals will be reviewed monthly and, if the Association has sufficient budget in-house (for instance due to underspend in another budget area), it will aim to front-fund adaptations with a view to claiming grant funding in the following year.

The Association will maintain regular contact with Scottish Government to ensure it has an opportunity to apply for any excess grant funding which becomes available throughout the financial year.

8. Allocation of adapted properties

Where an adapted property becomes void and the adaptation is in good condition and suitable for on-going use, the Association will endeavour to match the property to a tenant who would benefit from the adaptation.

In some circumstances it may not be feasible to identify a suitable tenant and, where all efforts have failed, the Association may choose to remove the adaptation in order to allow the void property to be let. The following guidelines will be followed where equipment is to be removed:

- Any removed equipment which was not installed by the Association will be returned to the installing agency (usually the Local Authority).
- Any Langstane installed equipment that is removed, and is in good condition, may be stored for reuse in the future.

- Any equipment which is in a poor state of repair should be removed and disposed of.

Where prospective tenants have a disability and are viewing a property which may need to be adapted to suit their needs, the allocating officer will arrange for an OT assessment in order that required adaptation works can be identified and the annual budget checked to ensure there is sufficient funding available. This will ensure that the prospective tenant can be given realistic timescales for any adaptation work they require.

To assist with the allocations process, all adaptations will be recorded on the Housing Management database. This information will be revised by the relevant Officer where adaptations are subsequently removed.

9. Key performance indicators (KPIs)

The following KPIs will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the adaptations service:

- The number of referrals received (Minor, major and total number*)
 - The number of adaptations completed by the Association within timescales (see below for timescales)
 - Average time taken to complete an adaptation (Minor (target = 28 days), Major (target = 80 days), both major and minor*)
 - Tenants overall satisfaction with their adaptation (target = 95% satisfied or very satisfied)
 - % of grant allocation spent (target = 100%)
- *these indicators are required for the Scottish Social Housing Charter annual return

The 80 day target for a major adaptation is based on the following key stages:

- Visit to tenant to undertake survey – within 14 days
- Designs finalised – a further 14 days
- Designs to tenant and OT for approval – 9 days
- Contractor pricing period – 14 days
- Pre works planning phase (H&S) and lead-in time for ordering equipment – up to 24 days
- Works undertaken – up to 5 days

Timescales will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain challenging.

10. Communication

Communication channels will be clearly established and maintained within the Association, and between the Association and the tenant and referrer.

Communication requirements are set out in detail in the accompanying procedures but, in order to ensure a person centred approach, the following will be the usual communication requirements for adaptations (based on a major adaptation):

- Advice leaflet issued to anyone who enquires about the adaptations service or to tenants who staff feel may benefit from the adaptations service.
- Within 5 days of referral being received – confirm receipt to tenant and referrer and provide details of the key contact within the Association and the next steps.
- Within 14 days of referral being received - if appropriate, arrange a joint visit to the property with the referring OT to agree the scope of the work and allow the tenant to make any choices required.
- Once proposals for the adaptation are finalised issue drawings to the tenant and referring OT to ensure they agree with the proposals. Some tenants may find it easier to discuss proposals face to face and this should be offered as an option.
- Once a contractor has been appointed, advise the tenant and referrer and provide anticipated start and completion dates.
- Once the works are complete, advise the referrer. Provide the tenant with any user instructions and care / maintenance information they require, and provide details of who they should contact in the event of any problems with the adaptation
- Issue feedback forms to tenant and referrer around 6 weeks after completion

11. Continuous Improvement

Tenant and referrer feedback is essential to ensure that the Association is meeting its policy objectives.

Feedback forms will be issued to tenants and referring OTs around 6 weeks after the completion of their adaptation. The Asset Manager will prepare an annual report on satisfaction and identify any lessons to be learned and how these can be implemented.

12. Monitoring and review

The KPIs to be used to monitor this policy are outlined at Section 9. KPI results will be reviewed quarterly.

This policy will be reviewed every three years, and earlier if regulatory or legislative changes require it.

Right to complain

In the event you are not satisfied with the service you have received, please contact the Association for a copy of the Complaints Policy. This can also be viewed on Langstane Housing Association's website – www.langstane-ha.co.uk.

Equality and diversity

The Langstane Group is committed to promoting equality and diversity across all areas of work. Discrimination or harassment of any kind is not tolerated.

If you would like this document sent to you in large print, please contact Support Services on 01224 423000.