Disabled Adaptations Policy

Cornwall Housing

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CORNWALL HOUSING

Policy control sheet

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Equality impact assessment record

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09-03-12	Full	Complete	See EIA	E. Hill	Sep 2014

Notes

This policy reflects joint practice across East Cornwall Landlord Services and Carrick Housing Ltd, and was agreed with tenants at the Stock Investment Steering Group.

Legal influences on this policy

Equality Act 2010
Disability Discrimination Act 1995
Housing Act 1985
Tenants' Compact

Non-legal influences on this policy

Delivering Housing Adaptations for Disabled People, June 2006

Other documents linked to this policy

Equality and Diversity Framework
Tenant Participation Policy
Responsive Repairs Policy
Planned and Cyclical Maintenance Policy
Asset Management Strategy

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1 POLICY STATEMENT AND AIMS

1.1 We are committed to helping people with disabilities to live independently in our housing stock, by providing an effective disabled aids and adaptations service, adequately resourced, transparent and efficient. The service aims to address the identified and assessed need our tenants and any members of their households for property aids and adaptations. At the same time we aim to ensure that we comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Housing Act 1985.

1.2 We both recognise and acknowledge the needs of our tenants and members of their households who have disabilities and are committed to work in partnership with Cornwall Council's Occupational Therapy Team to enable suitable aids and adaptations works to be carried out to tenants' homes. This policy explains how we will address the needs of our tenants and members of their households who have disabilities.

1.3 We will ensure that no individual is discriminated against on grounds of sex, marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language, social origin or other personal attributes including beliefs or opinions (such as religious beliefs or political opinions). We will promote equality of opportunity by publishing information in different languages and other formats such as large print, audio and Braille, on request.

2 POLICY OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the Disabled Adaptations Policy are:-

2.1 To put the needs of disabled residents first in our decision-making about adaptations.
2.2 To maximise the use of funds and resources available for disabled adaptations ensuring value for money at all times.
2.3 To carry out required adaptation works to our properties on receipt of a referral from Adult Care and Support occupational therapy departments, hospital occupational therapists or other trained assessors.
2.4 To comply with good practice guidance, including *Delivering Housing Adaptations for Disabled People* (June 2006).
2.5 To ensure works carried out have regard for the longer term view in terms of housing needs and property types for let available.
2.6 To comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements in relation to disabled adaptations.

2.7 To be consistent with other policies to ensure due regard to, for instance, equality and diversity, resident involvement, repairs and maintenance, procurement and asset management.

3 POLICY DEFINITIONS

3.1 For the purpose of this policy and procedural guidance, the definition of a **'disabled aid or adaptation'** is an alteration or addition to any aspect of a dwelling to make it easier or safer for use by a disabled person.

3.2 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a person as disabled if they have:-

- a mental or physical impairment; and
- this has an adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities;
- the adverse effect is substantial; and
- the adverse effect is long term (meaning it has lasted for 12 months or is likely to last for more than 12 months or for the rest of the person's life).

A person with a progressive condition, which will affect the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities in the future, is classed as disabled. At least one of these areas must be badly affected:-

- mobility
- manual dexterity
- physical co-ordination
- continence
- ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects
- speech, hearing or eyesight
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- understanding of the risk of physical danger

4 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

This section sets out the duties and responsibilities of local authorities to provide assistance to disabled people to enable them to move into and out of their homes, to utilise living and sleeping areas within the home and to access cooking, bathing and toilet facilities.

4.1 Housing Act 1985

Cornwall Council, as a local housing authority in discharging its duty under section 8 of the Housing Act 1985, must consider housing conditions and needs in Cornwall and have respect to the provision of further housing accommodation, and also have regard to the special needs of the chronically sick or disabled persons.

4.2 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995

Part 3 of the above Act imposes duties on service providers to make 'reasonable adjustments' to services without which it would be 'impossible or unreasonably difficult for the disabled person to use the service'. From 1st October 2004, where a physical feature makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to access goods or services, the organisation is required to take reasonable steps to:-

- remove the feature; or
- alter it so it no longer has that effect; or
- provide a reasonable means of avoiding the feature; or
- provide a reasonable alternative method for making the service available.

These provisions refer to public space and services offered by us including the communal areas of flats and sheltered housing schemes. They do not require works to the inside of tenants' homes which would be funded by disabled adaptations budgets. However, we will work within the spirit of the DDA in creating accessible homes for all our tenants.

5 POLICY GUIDANCE

5.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Our officers will take responsibility for the delivery of the installation and provision of the disabled aids and adaptations service, providing both professional and technical advice. We will ensure implementation and delivery which meets the agreed policy and procedural guidance and will liaise with you and also with any contractors through to completion of the work.

We will liaise with you and with Cornwall Council occupational therapists or other trained assessors to assess the suitability of the suggested adaptations for the property and work with all parties to ensure the most suitable outcome. We will advise on alternative accommodation if more suitable and about the help available to achieve any moves.

Cornwall Council's occupational therapists or other trained assessors will assess your needs, specify required works and priorities given and send written referrals to us for action within the agreed policy framework.

6 MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE POLICY

61 We will endeavour to ensure all disabled adaptation works carried out represent value for money, are of good quality, meet the your needs and minimise future maintenance costs.

6.2 If you wish to transfer, we will assess the likelihood of a more suitable or more easily adapted property becoming available. We will encourage a move, where the necessary adaptation works are extensive or where there is difficulty complying with part M of the Building Regulations. We will consider the area where you need to live for support services.

6.3 We will carefully consider the options of recycling different types of aids and adaptations, and develop clear protocols.

6.4 We will record all major disabled adaptations on our stock condition database and housing management system. Whenever practical, we will use this information to ensure that full use is made of existing facilities by targeting suitable adapted properties or applicants with matching mobility or other needs.

6.5 We will assume responsibility for the maintenance of all equipment installed and work carried out as part of any provision of aids and disabled adaptations us.

6.6 In enabling any provision of aids or adaptations to council homes these must first be requested by a Cornwall Council occupational therapist, hospital occupational therapist or other trained assessor following an assessment of an individual's needs. Those individuals must be council tenants or else children or other adults residing permanently within the household of a council tenant. It is not a condition that the individual(s) be registered as disabled.

6.7 We will consider more than one request for aid or adaptation should this be supported by the occupational therapist or trained assessor team. However, aids and adaptations may not be processed within the same financial year if there are budgetary and demand issues.

6.8 We will generally remove any disabled aids from our properties when they become empty, providing they are not required by the incoming tenant as this will enable re-use at a later date. Adaptations such as stair-lifts will be left in the property for letting to a housing applicant with an identified need for such. If none exists then these will be removed. Other adaptations such

as level access showers and wet rooms will be left in the property for the incoming tenant.

6.9 In cases where your property has undergone major adaptation work and you wish to exchange, this will only be approved if the other party to the exchange has an identified need for the adaptations.

6.10 Where full heating has been provided, we will not consider changing the fuel type and installing a different system, for example exchanging night storage heaters for gas.

6.11 Referrals for double glazing will not be considered a disabled adaptation as an installation programme already exists.

6.12 Exclusions under the disabled facilities grant are:-

- Disabled parking bays or facilities which encroach onto highways land
- Hardstandings for mobility scooters
- Storage facilities for mobility vehicles, including scooters
- External electrical charging facilities for mobility vehicles

7 PRIORITISATION OF WORKS

7.1 Requests are assessed on need and prioritised by the occupational therapy team using the following categories:-

- **Priority 1** **Urgent plus**: assessment and works undertaken immediately unless in the case of a major adaptation when planning permission or architects drawings are required. (for example, for an extension to a property).
- **Priority 2** **Urgent**: Completion target within 6 months.
- **Priority 3** **Routine**: Completion target within 12 months.

7.2 Requests assessed as urgent plus will always take priority over other priorities, and will be dealt with in date order. Other priorities will be dealt with in priority and date order also. The date the referral is received from the occupational therapist or trained assessor is the date at which the target times start.

8 FUNDING

8.1 Funding for disabled adaptations is included in the capital budget each financial year. In some cases where a major adaptation is required it may be more appropriate to consider moving the you and any members of your household to alternative

accommodation which may better suit your needs. The circumstances of such cases include:-

- When you are under-occupying your home; or
- When adaptation costs exceed £25,000; or
- When your home cannot be adapted to meet your needs.

8.2 If any of the above apply, we will work with you and any occupational therapist, trained assessor or support worker to identify where you would like to live and help you identify a suitable property. Suitability of any identified property will need to take into account any identified social and welfare needs, not just your disabled needs, as well as the suitability for adaptation.

8.3 In considering whether a property is suitable for adaptation we will consult with the occupational therapist or trained assessor to satisfy ourselves that it is both 'reasonable and practical' to carry out the identified work having regard to the age, construction and condition of the property or building.

8.4 Some structural characteristics of the dwelling may render some adaptations inappropriate, for example, stairs that do not allow a stair lift, non-traditional constructions that do not allow door widening, restricted movement for wheelchair users where halls and passages are too narrow, plumbing and drainage services that cannot accommodate level access showers. Each case is assessed and considered on its own merit.

8.5 In cases where the cost of any adaptation work exceeds £25,000 and re-housing is not being considered, the matter must be referred to the senior officer responsible for a decision and authorisation before any work is carried out.

8.6 Requests for adaptations to communal areas such as a stair rail or ramp within a communal entrance will be considered. Any positive or negative impact of an adaptation on other occupants of the building will be assessed and evaluated before any adaptation is agreed or refused. Each case will be considered on its merits and discussed with a senior officer.

9 MONITORING AND REVIEW

9.1 All requests received from occupational therapists and trained assessors are recorded on a waiting list database with the name of the customer, their address, the nature of the works required, the date the request was received and urgency categorisation. The database enables the team to record and monitor the time taken to process each request from start to finish.

9.2 Representatives from all teams should meet on a quarterly basis to monitor the time taken for an adaptation, from the date of the initial referral to the date the works are completed; also to discuss referrals and budget issues. Minutes of each meeting will be recorded for future reference.

9.3 Customer satisfaction surveys will be sent on completion of the works and will include all aspects from initial survey to completion; these will be recorded and monitored.

9.4 This policy will be reviewed with tenants every three years unless there is a change in legislation.

Alternative formats

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If you would like this information on audio CD, audio tape, Braille, large print, any other format or interpreted in a language other than English, please contact:-

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