



Property Management

Adaptations

Scope:	This policy applies to: Circle 33 Housing Trust, Invicta Telecare, Merton Priory Homes, Mole Valley Housing Association, Old Ford Housing Association, Russet Homes, South Anglia Housing, Wherry Housing Association
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Signed Off :	Group Policy Forum, 20 th November 2008
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Policy Owned by:	Policy
KLOE:	Stock Investment and Asset Management Access and Customer Care
QAF (Supported Housing):	C1.4 Fair Access S1.3 Empowerment and Supporting Independence
Statute:	Chronically Sick and Disabled Act 1970 Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005 Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002
Regulatory Code:	3.5

Adaptations Policy

1 Scope

1.1 This policy is applicable to:

- Circle 33 Housing Trust
- Invicta Telecare
- Mole Valley Housing Association
- Old Ford Housing Association
- Russet Homes
- South Anglia Housing
- Wherry Housing Association.

1.2 The Adaptations programme is available to general needs and supported housing residents of these Registered Non-Profit Social Housing Providers (Registered Providers).

1.3 Residents can apply for an Adaptation if they are elderly, disabled or in poor health and finding it difficult to move around the home or to use the bathroom and kitchen in particular.

2 Policy Statement

2.1 Circle Anglia works to improve people's life chances through providing great homes and reliable services to residents, and through helping build sustainable communities where people want to live and work.

2.2 Circle Anglia is committed to providing Adaptations to the homes of residents with disability and mobility needs to enable them to live safely and independently for as long as it is appropriate and possible.

2.3 The primary purpose of an Adaptation is to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity through modifying the physical environment. It is important therefore to seek to tailor the Adaptations provided to the circumstances of the individuals concerned.

2.4 Circle Anglia adheres to the Chronically Sick and Disabled Act 1970 and its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005. We will provide a responsive service to residents according to their needs.

- 2.5 Funding is generally available for minor Adaptations, including for example stair rails and grab rails, and some major Adaptations, including level access showers, stair lifts, and ramps.
- 2.6 Most major Adaptations will be provided through Disabled Facilities Grants, and applicants will be assisted to apply to their Local Authority for these. However, some Registered Providers have time-limited local arrangements as part of transfer promises to provide Adaptations independently.
- 2.7 Good relationships and partnership working with local authorities and relevant agencies for the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are key to the success of this service.
- 2.8 Circle Anglia is committed to appropriately letting its properties. Wherever possible properties which have adaptations will be prioritised for households with a need for those adaptations. Where Registered Providers do not control their own lettings due to partnership arrangements with Local Authorities we will work with our partners to ensure that lettings are appropriate.
- 2.9 We will assess whether an Adaptation to a customer's existing home is best value and more appropriate than moving to a home that is already adapted or may otherwise be more suitable to the customer's needs. To this end we will keep records of the homes that have already been adapted so that we can seek to offer our customers homes that are appropriate to their needs.
- 2.10 Circle Anglia is committed to improving our overall stock to meet residents' changing needs. On many of our new developments which are grant-funded Circle Anglia works toward meeting as many of the Lifetime Homes requirements as reasonably possible.
- 2.11 In addition where properties being built by Circle Anglia will be coming into our management we will seek to work with Local Authorities to explore possibilities of pre-allocating properties for adaptation at an early stage.

3 Policy

- 3.1 We have a duty to our residents to provide Adaptations to meet their needs.
- 3.2 It is important for us to work closely with relevant Local Authorities and other agencies in the delivery of Adaptations to ensure that the resident receives a coordinated service. In some Local Authority areas formal arrangements may be set up to share information and coordinate processing of applications. Circle Anglia prefers these approaches, and wherever possible will seek to establish a Service Level Agreement with the relevant Local Authority. We will

cooperate and contribute to all efforts to improve the overall service received by residents, including sharing of information.

- 3.3 Local Authorities are required by law to fund Adaptations which qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant. Residents can apply directly to the relevant Local Authority, or we can apply on the resident's behalf as their landlord.
- 3.4 The social services authority also has a responsibility to provide community care equipment and minor Adaptations, which a person has been assessed to need and for which he or she is eligible, free of charge provided the cost (including fittings) is less than £1,000.
- 3.5 The obligation on a Local Authority to provide Disabled Facilities Grants to eligible applicants for eligible work (subject to the test of the applicant's resources) is primary, absolute and remains irrespective of whether other assistance is provided by a social services authority or other body such as a Registered Provider.
- 3.6 We will also partner with other relevant organisations including those in the voluntary sector such as Age Concern.

Adaptations

- 3.7 Adaptations can include works such as:
 - widening doors and installing ramps
 - providing or improving access to rooms and facilities - for example, by installing a stair lift or providing a downstairs bathroom
 - improving or providing a heating system which is suitable for the resident's needs
 - adapting heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use
- 3.8 Adaptations do not usually include the following works:
 - External works unless they are necessary to allow access to the property
 - The supply or installation of mobility scooter ramps or storage
 - Acoustic insulation, double glazing, central heating
 - Repairs outside of warranty: these are the responsibility of reactive maintenance
 - Like for like replacements: these are the responsibility of planned maintenance

- 3.9 Although these items cannot usually be covered by a Disabled Facilities Grant, Registered Providers may locally decide to provide such adaptations out of their own budgets.
- 3.10 Adaptations which come into the category of “Minor Adaptations” are listed in the [Appendix](#) to this policy.

Disabled Facilities Grants

- 3.11 To be eligible for an Adaptation a resident usually will need to meet the criteria for a Disabled Facilities Grant. Whether the resident is eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant will usually be decided by an Occupational Therapist assessment. The Occupational Therapist recommendation must state that the Adaptations are considered “appropriate and necessary” and that the person has a disability that is “permanent and substantial”. These are definitions used by Occupational Therapists to assess the needs of an individual.
- 3.12 A Disabled Facilities Grant will always be the first option for major Adaptations. However where a Disabled Facilities Grant cannot be obtained from a local authority within a reasonable timescale, Circle Anglia will consider funding it internally. Registered Providers will set local limits for such funding.
- 3.13 Circle Anglia will generally not seek an Occupational Therapist recommendation for certain minor Adaptations such as grab rails. Guidance about provision of minor Adaptations is available from the Department of Communities and Local Government. Registered Providers will devise minor Adaptations programmes accordingly.
- 3.14 To be eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant a resident must also be able to certify that they intend to occupy the property as their only or main residence throughout the grant period - currently five years.

Right to Improve

- 3.15 Residents may, in accordance with their tenancy agreement request consent to carry out Adaptation work at their own cost. Residents should seek permission from their landlord before carrying out any works. For more information please see the [Property Alterations and Improvements policy](#).

Recycling of equipment

- 3.16 In order to both maximise the use of our resources and provide an excellent service to our residents, we will where reasonably possible in the lettings

process match adapted properties to residents whose needs require those Adaptations.

- 3.17 Where there isn't an adapted property available which suits the resident's needs, we will take reasonable steps to allocate them a property which will be suitable to adapt.
- 3.18 If equipment is no longer needed and can be of help to someone else it will be recycled, for example where possible stair lifts which are no longer required are removed, stored and re-used.
- 3.19 The removal of Adaptations will usually only be carried out if the equipment can be reused elsewhere.
- 3.20 Registered Providers will locally consider the loaning of portable Adaptations as part of their Adaptations program. Where they do so they will ensure that the adaptations are maintained to appropriate standards and are safe for use.

4 Applications

- 4.1 Residents who feel that they are eligible for an Adaptation can apply to their landlord in writing or by telephone. Alternatively, someone may make the application on their behalf.
- 4.2 To qualify, residents will usually need to meet the criteria for a Disabled Facilities Grant. Registered Providers have local discretion to arrange adaptations for others who do not meet these criteria.
- 4.3 Many requests for Adaptations come from Occupational Therapists rather than residents. Circle Anglia will promote its service so that residents feel able to refer themselves for such Adaptations without waiting unnecessarily for an Occupational Therapist.
- 4.4 We will provide guidance and support where appropriate in accessing an Occupational Therapist assessment and completing a Disabled Facilities Grant application to a Local Authority.
- 4.5 We will work towards formalising relationships with Occupational Therapists through a Service Level Agreement or direct employment.
- 4.6 Where possible residents may be given a level of choice about their Adaptation.

Funding

- 4.7 Where appropriate Circle Anglia will assist the resident in applying for a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant. We will work closely with Local Authority partners to ensure this process is efficient and effective.
- 4.8 The maximum amount of grant available for a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant is currently subject to a limit of £30,000 in England. The amount payable may also be subject to a deduction derived from a test of the financial resources of the disabled person and their partner. Where the application is for a disabled child or young person under the age of nineteen there is no means test.
- 4.9 The general power under Article 3 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 enables housing authorities to give discretionary assistance, in any form, (e.g. grant, loan or equity release) for Adaptations. The financial assistance can also be provided indirectly to the disabled person through a third party.
- 4.10 Registered Non-Profit Social Housing Providers (Registered Providers) can also use other sources of funding such as grants payable under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 or funding from charities. Circle Anglia will actively seek to source additional funding.
- 4.11 Registered Providers locally provide in-house funding for minor Adaptations which are not provided by social services. Where a need for an Adaptation is high and a resident is likely to endure considerable and unacceptable delay as the result of a Disabled Facilities Grant application, Registered Providers will consider funding larger Adaptations as well.
- 4.12 To cover these costs Registered Providers will locally be responsible for setting aside appropriate funds out of the overall annual budget. Local cost ceilings will be set annually.
- 4.13 There may be some situations where funding agreements differ from those outlined above, for instance commitments made as part of a stock transfer process.

Prioritisation

- 4.14 Adaptation works are where possible prioritised according to the date that the Occupational Therapist's recommendations are received.

4.15 However, priority is also given to medical or other essential needs which are ranked as follows:

- (1) Risk to life and bed-blocking (highest priority)
- (2) Access to toileting
- (3) Access to bathing
- (4) Access to cooking facilities
- (5) Access to the community

4.16 Urgent cases such as hospital discharges will be fast tracked wherever possible.

5 Carrying out an Adaptation

Timescale for Adaptations

5.1 Minor Adaptations, for example additional stair rails, are generally easier and quicker to procure than major Adaptations. We aim to complete these works as soon as reasonably practicable and ideally within four weeks of receipt of the Occupational Therapist recommendation (or where an OT recommendation is not required, four weeks from the date of application).

5.2 Major Adaptations, for example a bath replacement with a level access shower, generally require a survey and drawings and a technical specification to be produced. The works therefore take longer to procure. If funding is available and it is not necessary to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant we aim to complete these works within 14 weeks of receipt of the Occupational Therapist recommendation.

5.3 If however we apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant the time scale will be dependent on the Local Authority. They are required to respond within 6 months, and carry out the adaptation if possible within 12 months.

Contractors

5.4 All contractors working on installation or repair of Adaptations will meet our Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity and quality standards. Contractors will generally specialise in Adaptation works.

5.5 Registered Providers will select contractors in line with Best Value considerations.

Decants

- 5.6 Local arrangements will be made between appropriate departments such as the Neighbourhood Team or the Supported Housing Division if a resident needs to be decanted and the Decants policy will be followed.

Repair and maintenance of Adaptations

- 5.7 Repair and maintenance of most Adaptations is carried out by the repairs team. However, breakdowns during the first year may be covered by a potential claim under the manufacturer's warranty or contractors' defects period.
- 5.8 The initial installation of Adaptations should anticipate future repair and maintenance needs so that repairs are as easy to carry out as possible.
- 5.9 Repairs to any Adaptations are treated as "urgent" – i.e. repair to be carried out within seven calendar days.
- 5.10 Adaptations which have a limited life span, for example stair lifts, hoists, and through floor lifts will be added to the appropriate cyclical maintenance contract and will be replaced accordingly.

Planned maintenance programmes

- 5.11 Wherever planned maintenance programmes are due for an area Registered Providers will be responsible to promote the Adaptations program to residents in that area so that any needed adaptations can be done concurrently with planned works.

6 Service Standards

- 6.1 Enquiries concerning Adaptations will be dealt with promptly and in accordance with our customer service standards.
- 6.2 Where possible we will give residents a level of choice about their adaptation.

We will:

- 6.3 Tell residents how the Adaptations process works and keep them informed throughout
- 6.4 Give residents clear information about any work we will carry out in their home, including target dates
- 6.5 Ensure that we have easily accessible information about the service.

- 6.6 Keep our residents informed through each stage of their works and seek their feedback.
- 6.7 Have clear timescales for works.
- 6.8 Work in partnership with Local Authorities and other organisations including the voluntary sector to maximise the works that we can undertake for our residents and minimise waiting times.
- 6.9 Work in partnership with contractors to obtain the best value for money possible ensuring our contractors understand the importance of quality, diversity and sensitivity when undertaking works.
- 6.10 Make best use of our adapted homes and recycle Adaptations to obtain the best value for money.

7 Monitoring

- 7.1 All Registered Providers will report the following Local Performance Indicators:
- Completion of Minor Adaptations: % of minor Adaptations completed within target
 - Average end to end times for minor Adaptations
 - Satisfaction with minor Adaptations
 - Satisfaction with major Adaptations
- 7.2 Benchmarking of Registered Providers achievement against these targets will be carried out by the Stock Investment and Asset Management Benchmarking Group.
- 7.3 Customers who have used the Adaptations service will be given the opportunity to feed back on the service they have received.
- 7.4 We will make details available about our Adaptations service including how we have performed against timescales and customer satisfaction levels and review targets regularly. We will report on results 6 monthly to Registered Provider Boards
- 7.5 We will keep records of the homes that have already been adapted so that we can make reasonable efforts to offer our customers homes that are appropriate to their needs.

Service reviews

- 7.6 Each year a formal review of the year's programme and performance will be carried out, including consideration of likely demand for the following year.
- 7.7 Budgets and cost ceilings will be reviewed by Registered Providers every year to keep up with rising costs according to a transparent methodology.
- 7.8 The review will also assess working relationships with the Local Authority and other relevant partners, and consider ways to improve them in order to provide a better service for residents seeking adaptations.

8 Equality and Diversity

- 8.1 It is essential to recognise that customers of all races, ages, religions, gender, sexual orientation, literacy levels and disability should be treated equally and fairly.
- 8.2 All customers will have access to this document upon request or from our website www.circleanglia.org/customers
- 8.3 This document can be translated or provided in alternative formats (e.g. Braille, large print, audio) upon request.
- 8.4 Equality and Diversity training is mandatory for all staff.

9 Publicising the Policy

- 9.1 Circle Anglia publicises its policies and procedures on Adaptations to residents and staff in a number of ways:
- Resident Handbook
 - Leaflets
 - Resident Newsletter
 - Resident Website
 - CIRANO
 - Policy Briefings

Training will provided to staff as appropriate.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	A local council grant to help towards the cost of adapting a home to enable residents to continue to live there.
Occupational Therapist (OT)	A health professional trained to help people who are ill or disabled learn to manage their daily activities.
Lifetime Homes	Lifetime homes is a standard of building which takes into account the changing needs of individual throughout their lifetime. The flexibility and adaptability of Lifetime Homes accommodate life events quickly, cost-effectively and without upheaval.

Related Documents

Document	Link
Connected Policies:	Property Alterations and Improvements
Forms and Letters:	Adaptations refusal letter A Adaptations refusal letter B Adaptations LA OT assessment Adaptations 3 month letter Adaptations DFG application letter
Leaflets:	Adaptations
Other:	

Version history

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Resident consultation:			
Signed off by:	Group Policy Forum, September 27 th 2007		
Author:	Abi Patience, Policy Officer Michael Pughsley, Property Programmes Manager		

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Staff consultation (teams):	Central Asset Management team Development Heads of Continuous Improvement Neighbourhood teams at each Registered Provider Property teams at each Registered Provider Adaptations Coordinators and specialists at each Registered Provider Support Initiatives Benchmarking group		
Resident consultation:	Mole Valley Operations Working group Mole Valley Policy Forum Russet Residents' Panel		
Signed off by:	Group Policy Forum, 20 th November 2008		
Author:	Abi Patience, Policy Officer		

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