

New



Revision



Property Management

Adaptations

Scope:	This policy applies to: Circle 33 Housing Trust, Old Ford Housing Association, South Anglia Housing, Wherry Housing Association
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Adaptations Policy

1 Scope

1.1 This policy is applicable to:

- Circle 33 Housing Trust
- Old Ford Housing Association
- South Anglia Housing, and
- Wherry Housing Association.

1.2 The adaptations programme is available to tenants of all of these RSLs with the exceptions of:

- Leaseholders
- Shared owners
- Tenants who are applying for Right to Acquire, Right to Buy or Homebuy, and
- Tenants who are on the transfer list (unless it is anticipated that it will take longer than 6 months)

1.3 These residents may still be able to apply directly to their Local Authority for a Disabled Facilities Grant.

1.4 Tenants 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.

1.5 Tenants must meet the criteria for a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant and in most cases have an Occupational Therapist (OT) 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”.

1.6 Tenants may not require an Occupational Therapist assessment for minor adaptations such as grab rails.

1.7 Adaptations can include:

- 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 tenant's needs
- adapting heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use

1.8 Adaptations do not 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

2 Policy Statement

- 2.1 Circle Anglia is committed to its aim to provide 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.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 Circle Anglia adheres to the Chronically Sick and Disabled Act 1970 and its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005 and will provide a responsive service to tenants according to their needs.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 Large adaptations that do not form part of the structure or fabric of a building could be depreciated and a service charge levied against the tenant.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 On new developments which are grant-funded Circle Anglia meets as many of the Lifetime Homes requirements as is reasonably possible in order to improve

our overall stock to meet residents' changing needs, bearing in mind economic and practical considerations.

3 Policy

- 3.1 We have a duty to our tenants to provide adaptations to meet their needs.
- 3.2 Local Authorities are required by law to fund adaptations which qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant. Tenants can apply directly to the relevant Local Authority, or we can apply on the tenant's behalf as their landlord.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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 an RSL.
- 3.5 It is important for us to work closely with relevant Local Authorities and other agencies in the delivery of adaptations to ensure that the tenant receives a coordinated service.
- 3.6 We will also partner with other organisations such as Age Concern on adaptations projects.
- 3.7 Circle Anglia will share monitoring information that is benchmarked against other social housing providers including waiting lists and customer satisfaction to assist in our negotiations with Local Authorities to ensure the effective use of Disabled Facilities Grant.
- 3.8 Circle Anglia will generally not seek an Occupational Therapist recommendation for certain minor adaptations such as grab rails. Many requests for adaptations however come from Occupational Therapists rather than tenants. Circle Anglia will promote its service so that tenants feel able to refer themselves for such adaptations without waiting unnecessarily for an Occupational Therapist.
- 3.9 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, up to a limit of £2500 per year, and per tenant if different adaptations are required. However where more than one tenant in a property requires the same adaptation, the total contribution towards that adaptation will be up to £2500.

- 3.10 In some situations where the delay in receiving a Disabled Facilities Grant is long, a senior manager may authorise an exception to this limit and provide a more expensive adaptation to a resident.
- 3.11 Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) 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.
- 3.12 Circle Anglia is committed to appropriately letting its properties. 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.
- 3.13 We will work in partnership with contractors to deliver an effective, efficient and good quality service to customers. It is essential that contractors carrying out adaptations works are timely and sensitive to the customers needs. We will act in accordance with our [Contractor Management](#) policy and service standards.

Eligibility

- 3.14 To be eligible for an adaptation a tenant needs to meet the criteria for a Disabled Facilities Grant. Whether the tenant is eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant will usually be decided by an Occupational Therapist assessment.
- 3.15 To be eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant a tenant 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.

4 Applications

- 4.1 Tenants who feel that they are eligible for an adaptation can apply in writing or by telephone. Alternatively, someone may make the application on their behalf.
- 4.2 We will provide guidance and support in accessing an Occupational Therapist assessment, and where appropriate completing a Disabled Facilities Grant application to a Local Authority.
- 4.3 Where possible tenants may be given a level of choice about their adaptation.

Funding

- 4.4 Circle Anglia provides in-house funding for minor adaptations, up to £2500 per tenant per year. Where a tenant is high on the list of priorities (see 4.11) and is likely to endure considerable and unacceptable delay as the result of a Disabled Facilities Grant application, Circle Anglia will fund adaptations up to the value of £5000. This is subject to agreement by the Managing Director of the relevant RSL at their discretion and is dependent on the agreed annual budget.
- 4.5 If the cost of the adaptation exceeds the funding available then Circle Anglia will assist the tenant in applying for a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant. We will work closely with Local Authority partners to ensure this process is efficient and effective.
- 4.6 The maximum amount of grant available for a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant is currently subject to a limit of £25,000 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.
- 4.7 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.
- 4.8 There may be some situations where funding agreements differ from those outlined above, for instance commitments made as part of a stock transfer process.

Timescale for adaptations

- 4.9 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 4 weeks of receipt of the Occupational Therapist recommendation.
- 4.10 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. 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.

Prioritisation

- 4.11 Adaptation works are where possible prioritised according to the date that the Occupational Therapist's recommendations are received. 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
- 4.12 If there is funding available and there is no need to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant, tenants' details will be added to the adaptations programme waiting list held by the local RSL.

Decants and Compensation

- 4.13 Local arrangements will be made between appropriate departments such as the Neighbourhood Team or the Supported Housing Division if a tenant needs to be decanted and the Decants policy will be followed.
- 4.14 Compensation will be awarded in line with the Decants Policy.

Right to Improve

- 4.15 Tenants may, in accordance with their tenancy agreement request consent to carry out adaptation work at their own cost. Tenants should seek permission from their landlord before carrying out any works.

5 Repair and maintenance of adaptations

- 5.1 Repair and maintenance of most adaptations is carried out by the repairs team. However, breakdowns during the first year after an adaptation should be reported to the adaptations co-ordinator, as there may be a potential claim under the manufacturer's warranty.
- 5.2 Repairs to any adaptations are treated as urgent.
- 5.3 Adaptations which have a limited life span, for example stair lifts, hoists, through floor lifts and closomats will be added to the appropriate Service contract and will be replaced accordingly.

Recycling of equipment

- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 The removal of adaptations will only be carried out if the equipment can be reused elsewhere.

6 Service Standards

- 6.1 Enquiries concerning adaptations will be dealt with promptly and in accordance with our customer service guarantee.
- 6.2 We will comply with our [Contractor Management policy](#) in the procurement and management of contractors to ensure Health and Safety, Equality and

Diversity and quality standards are met. Contractors will generally specialise in adaptation works.

- 6.3 We aim to complete minor adaptations (less than £500) within 4 weeks, and major adaptations within 14 weeks (8 weeks referral to specification and 6 weeks specification to completion).

We will:

- 6.4 Tell residents how the adaptations process works and keep them informed throughout
- 6.5 Give residents clear information about any work we will carry out in their home, including target dates
- 6.6 Ensure that we have easily accessible information about the service.
- 6.7 Keep our residents informed through each stage of their works and seek their feedback.
- 6.8 Have clear timescales for works.
- 6.9 Work in partnership with Local Authorities to maximise the works that we can undertake for our residents and minimise waiting times.
- 6.10 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.
- 6.11 Make best use of our adapted homes and recycle adaptations to obtain the best value for money.

7 Monitoring

7.1 We will record the following details:

- date the adaptation order is raised
- type of adaptation, and
- cost of the adaptation.

7.2 These details are recorded in order that:

- if a repair is reported we know if it is still under warranty
- properties can be appropriately re-let
- adaptations can be re-cycled if no longer required, and

- the budget can be monitored and set appropriately each year.
- 7.3 We will make details available about our Adaptations service including how we have performed against timescales and customer satisfaction levels and review targets regularly and will report on results 6 monthly to RSL Boards
- 7.4 Customers who have used the adaptations service will be given the opportunity to feed back on the service they have received.
- 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.

8 Equality and Diversity

- 8.1 It is essential to recognise that customers of all races, ages, religions, gender, sexual orientation 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.
- 8.5 We will monitor those applying for and receiving adaptations to ensure that this service does not discriminate in any way.

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