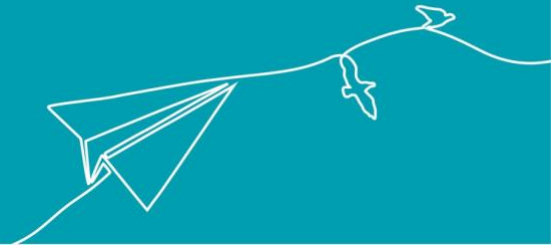


Adaptations Policy



Introduction

Great Places Housing Group is committed to ensuring that all customers can live safely and independently within their homes. In addition to refurbishing and developing properties that are designed to be accessible, modifying home environments to be more accessible is a key part in allowing people to gain and maintain independence.

Adaptations form a key part of Great Places' approach to promoting independence, wellbeing and improving the quality of life of customers through recognising the essential role of housing in achieving health outcomes. In addition to this, Great Places' role in providing adaptations also supports partners across the wider health and social care sector, reducing trips and falls, preventing hospital and care admissions and supporting effective hospital discharge.

Context

Great Places is regulated by the Regulator for Social Housing. The Home Standard (from April 1, 2024, the Consumer Standards, Safety and Quality Standard) sets out expectations for registered providers of housing. As such Great Places is committed to working proactively with Local Authority partners who have a statutory responsibility to deliver access to, assessment for and financial support for adaptations. However, as Great Places works within 44 Local Authority areas, this policy acknowledges the need for Great Places to have a consistent approach to ensure equal access to adaptations for all customers.

This policy focuses on meeting the individual needs of customers and their family members living in the home who need assistance via an adaptation due to a health need or disability that has had significant impact on their ability to live independently or receive care within the home and that are of a long term nature that is substantial enough to require adaptations to the home. Adaptations may be requested by the customer or an agency on their behalf or identified by a colleague of Great Places to support a customer.

Reference to adaptations in this policy includes minor adaptations up to £1000 (including equipment to make life around the home easier day to day) or major adaptations over £1000 within the home (including access requirements). The terms minor and major will be used where distinction is needed.

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the policy are:

- To provide a service that focuses on the individual needs of customers, their families and carers, whilst effectively managing investment in the housing stock/assets.

Adaptations Policy



- To ensure adequate budget for major adaptations that meets the needs of customers, whilst investing in stock in a planned and proactive way to limit the need for major adaptations in future.
- We will take a 'right first time' approach in assessing requests for adaptations that demonstrates respect for customers
- We will work with partners to ensure that our approach is innovative and adaptable to future demand.

Principles:

- We will work within the principles of our Service Delivery Framework.
- We will provide customers with easy access to minor adaptations via the Customer Hub, without requirement for assessment or approval, unless required to provide a suitable adaptation.
- We will provide clear information about our approach to assessing requests for major adaptations to ensure these can be processed quickly and efficiently.
- We will work within the principle of reasonable adjustment in assessing requests for major adaptations.
- We will work in a person-centred way with customers where requests are not approved, providing clear feedback to ensure needs continue to be met and to limit risk to the customer.

What is involved?

Partnership Working

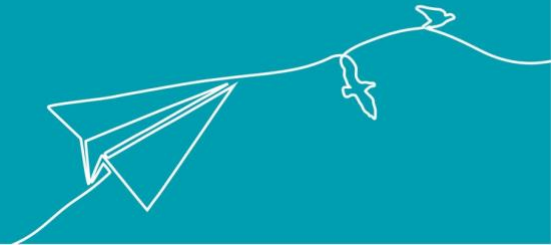
- We will adopt a partnership approach with Local Authorities to deliver appropriate adaptations which best meet the needs of customers, whilst effectively managing investment in the housing stock/assets.
- We will work in partnership across teams within Great Places to ensure that the customer experience of the adaptations process is positive: from making a request to the Customer Hub, accessing advice and support from front line colleagues, assessing the feasibility of the property for adaptation and providing feedback.
- We will seek out external partnerships to ensure that support for customers is maximised, acknowledging that the support needed may be greater than the property can provide.

Promoting the service

Great Places will proactively support customers and promote adaptations through:

- Training colleagues across Customer Services, Repairs and Assets to understand the role of adaptations and proactively seek opportunities to support customers by providing a 'front line' service for adaptations.

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- Taking a professional curiosity approach in speaking to customers to understand their requirements.
- Providing clear information to inform customers of the process for adaptations and campaigns to highlight the service.

Funding

Great Places will make appropriate resources available for adaptations via an annual budget, considering previous spend, investment through planned works and customer profile information.

Minor adaptations:

Budget for minor adaptations up to £1000 will be provided via the Adaptations Budget overseen by the Sustainable Assets and Repairs Directorate. The budget will be made available across all Customer Services regions and expenditure will be recorded and monitored to ensure effective spending.

Minor adaptations are those that are easily installed and do not require structural changes to the home. They include things like grab rails, stair rails, bath/shower rails and shower seats that are fixed to the wall.

No Occupational Therapist referral is required for minor adaptations.

Major adaptations:

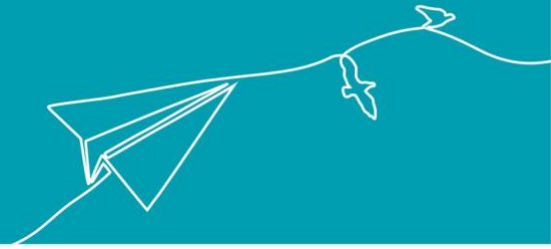
Great Places will provide information for customers in accessing Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) via their Local Authority to fund major adaptations. An Occupational Therapist assessment will be required for all major adaptations. We will work closely with Occupational Therapists to ensure that major adaptations meet customers' needs in a sustainable way, especially where DFG is accessed by the customer.

Examples of major adaptations include access ramps, stairlifts, level access bathing facilities, through floor lifts and extensions to accommodate these or additional facilities. Major adaptations may be carried out for customers with a physical disability or health condition, but can also include adaptations due to sensory needs, learning difficulties, cognitive impairment or a mental health condition.

The amount of contribution made by Great Places is the same across all Local Authority areas to ensure fairness and consistency for customers and to make best use of the Great Places adaptations budget and Local Authority Disabled Facilities Grant budgets.

Tier 1

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Great Places will provide up to 40% of funding for major adaptations up to £10,000 (a maximum of £4000), with the remaining cost to be met by Disabled Facilities Grant.

Tier 2

Great Places will take a panel approach to decisions for the contribution (including percentage) towards major adaptations:

- Where the total cost is more than £10,000, including major adaptations that will be permanent and improve the property in the longer term and adaptations where the above limit would prevent the adaptation taking place and all alternative options have been explored.
- Where a lack of Local Authority Disabled Facilities Grant funding would mean the adaptation not being carried out, including where customers are unsuccessful in obtaining a Disabled Facilities Grant following means testing or Local Authorities do not provide funding, Great Places will consider each individual case and in exceptional circumstances may provide funding under Tier 2. However, this will not replace the Local Authority duty to provide DFG and all other options will have been exhausted. All decisions will be dependent upon the level of investment required.

An assessment by an Occupational Therapist will be required for all Major Adaptations (Tier 1 and Tier 2).

Maintenance and servicing

Great Places will work in partnership with Local Authorities to identify and record responsibilities for servicing and maintenance of adaptations. Where Great Places is responsible, adequate records will be made to ensure that servicing and maintenance is carried out in order to ensure customer wellbeing and safety is maintained.

Alternative accommodation

Where the major adaptation cannot be carried out due to the building structure or would not promote best use of the property (for example under-occupation), we will work with the customer to advise on and support a move to accommodation that meets their needs. Great Places acknowledges the restrictions on available suitable accommodation and delays that occur with Choice Based Letting systems. Great Places will work proactively with Local Authority partners to establish adapted property lists in local areas and to support priority moves for customers requiring this. Any decision to not carry out an adaptation and to ask a customer to relocate will be taken in the context of managing any residual risk to the customer from continuing to live in the property.

Transfers and mutual exchanges

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If a customer for whom an adaptation has been carried out wishes to transfer or undertake mutual exchange to another Great Places property, we will use discretion to determine whether such a move can take place, reviewing each case individually.

Leasehold and Shared Ownership Customers

Customers living in leasehold properties (including shared ownership) are required to ask for permission from Great Places before carrying out any major adaptations in their property. Great Places will not unreasonably withhold permission. Great Places is not responsible for making a financial contribution to major adaptations in leasehold properties and is not responsible for providing minor adaptations.

Great Places will provide advice and guidance where required on accessing Disabled Facilities Grant and support from the Local Authority where required.

Removal of adaptations

When a property with a major adaptation becomes void, Great Places will work with the Local Authority to identify the most appropriate allocation. If the adaptation was provided to meet a specific customer's requirements and cannot be used by another customer, it will be removed. New customers will be asked if they want to retain minor adaptations in the property and if not, these will be removed and reused or recycled where possible. If a customer wishes to retain minor adaptations, these will be checked and serviced where needed.

Data Sharing Arrangements

Great Places will maintain data sharing arrangements with Local Authorities to facilitate the sharing of information to support our customers. This will be managed with each Local Authority on an individual basis. Support on determining appropriate data security measures is provided by the Data Protection Team.

Customer Involvement

To understand how customers use our services and ask for support, Great Places talked to customers to understand their perspective.

We used what customers told us was important to them to make this policy clear and provide a simpler decision-making process when considering adaptation requests. We have also improved our systems so that every adaptation is recorded, and we build greater knowledge about our customers' needs.

This will help us to provide a service that focuses on the individual needs of our customers, their families and carers, whilst taking a 'best use' approach to the provision of housing.

Identifying Needs and Accessibility

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The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy sets out our commitment to improving the lives of all our customers and making our society a better place for everyone. We want to ensure that all our customers have a meaningful voice, and that we provide them with the best customer experience. In line with our legal and regulatory duties we must ensure that the services we provide are accessible, and where possible are tailored to the individual needs of our customers.

This includes identifying barriers and adjusting the way we deliver services. For example, we may need to change the way we communicate with customers, how we deliver a service to make sure it does not adversely affect a customer group, or in the context of adaptations, identify necessary changes to customers' homes to make them more accessible or support customers to live independently.

Colleagues can contact our EDI Specialist for more guidance on how we ensure we consider reasonable adjustment and the needs of our customers through adaptations.

Monitoring

We will monitor our performance around the delivery of adaptations in line with the policy to ensure we meet the needs of our customers and deal with requests within appropriate timescales.

Who will be involved?

All Customer Services, Repairs and Assets colleagues have knowledge of the policy and accompanying procedure to ensure they can identify customers who may benefit from adaptations.

Links to related policies, strategies, and procedures

Guidance Notes – Adaptations

Adaptations Case Management User Guide

Policy approval date:	December 2023
Equality impact assessment date:	August 2023
Reducing carbon impact assessment date:	N/A
Safeguarding/Modern Slavery impact:	August 2023
Policy review date:	December 2024
Lead team:	Sustainable Assets and Repairs
Level of authorisation required:	Directors

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Please record all authorisation meetings, with dates and details	Approved at Directors August 2023
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