

# Aids and Adaptations Policy 2024-27



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Required checklist	Completed
The policy aligns with relevant legislation, regulation and the strategic objectives of Plan A 2022/25.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The policy has been informed as appropriate by transactional and/or amplified customer voice.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The policy has been impact assessed and any appropriate mitigations identified implemented.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The policy is fully aligned with and complements other related policies.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The procedures underpinning the policy have been updated as required.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The PMF/risk registers have been updated to reflect the policy's assurance framework.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This policy outlines our principles and approach to adapting homes to meet the needs of tenants whose current home is no longer suitable because of a disability or life limiting condition affecting them or another permanent household member, wherever practicable.

## 2.0 Purpose

2.1 Through the provision of an effective aids and adaptations service, we:

- are committed to ensuring older and vulnerable tenants and other permanent members of the household are empowered and enabled to live independently in their own homes, wherever reasonably possible, for as long as possible.
- aim to treat people as individuals, recognising and responding to their individual, diverse needs fairly and respectfully.
- ensure that we continue to make best use of our existing housing stock, meeting local housing need and support Local Authorities to discharge their statutory duties in relation to enabling access to appropriate housing for those in housing need.

2.2 This policy aims to ensure that all customers are provided and enabled access to fair and equitable support when they require aids and adaptations by ensuring customers do not suffer detriment when accessing and receiving our services, or in any referral arrangements to other partners, when receiving support regarding aids and adaptations.

## 3.0 Principles

3.1 The principles underpinning this policy are aligned to Livin's values of trust, respect, innovate and working together.

- **Trust –**  
We build trust with our customers by being responsive and supportive to their aids and adaptations needs, helping to deliver the service they need.
- **Respect –**  
We listen to customers, treat tenants as individuals and respond to their needs in a fair, respectful, and caring way.
- **Innovate –**  
We will use our data to adapt our services and do things differently when our customers need it to remove or reduce any disadvantage.
- **Work together –**  
We will work well and collaborate with teams and our partners to understand customer needs and vulnerabilities, delivering services in a joined-up way.

3.2 Aids and adaptations, tailored to the needs of individuals, enable tenants and members of their household to live safely, independently, and sustainably in their homes. The provision of a responsive aids and adaptations service contributes to balanced places by enabling older and more vulnerable people to remain within their communities as their health needs change over time.

## 4.0 Definitions

4.1 The key terms used in this policy are defined below.

<b>Aid</b>	<p>An aid is a piece of equipment which is portable and not permanently fixed in the home.</p> <p>An aid will always be considered as a first option before any major adaptations are recommended.</p>
<b>Adaptation</b>	<p>A modification to a disabling environment in order to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for individuals and their families – providing an individualised solution to the problems experienced by people in a disabling environment.</p>
<b>Minor Adaptation</b>	<p>Minor adaptations cost under £1000 and tend to be requested by the tenant rather than professionally recommended (for example via a health professional/occupational therapist). They are usually simple, cost-effective solutions to assist a person to live independently with or without care. Examples include lever taps, grab rails, accessible lights and sockets.</p> <p>Aids and adaptations costing £1,000 or less will be funded through our own annual aids and adaptations budget. A means test does not apply to minor aids and adaptations.</p>
<b>Major Adaptation</b>	<p>Major adaptations are valued over £1000 and usually involve a change to a property's components or structure including, but not limited to, provision of lifting aids, stairlift installation, level-access showers, wet rooms.</p>
<b>Disability</b>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 states someone is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out their normal day-to-day activities.</p>
<b>Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)</b>	<p>A means tested grant provided by Local Authorities to cover the cost of providing adaptations and access to essential facilities that enable a disabled person to continue living in their home. The local authority must be satisfied that the adaptation is "necessary and appropriate" to meet the person's needs.</p>
<b>Home Improvement Agency (HIA)</b>	<p>Provides a range of services to help older people, people with disabilities and vulnerable people live safely and independently in their homes, facilitated by local authorities either directly or through commissioning arrangements.</p>
<b>Permanent household member</b>	<p>A member of a tenant's household who resides at the property as their main and permanent home.</p>

## 5.0 Scope

5.1 This policy applies to general needs, affordable rent, and rent to buy tenants who are within their fixed-term period.

5.2 Tenants require our permission to make adaptations to homes and all such requests will be managed through the Tenant Led Alterations Policy and supporting procedures.

## 6.0 Contribution to Plan A

6.1 Our Plan A 2022-25 business strategy is viewed through the prism of place with six complementary, joined-up delivery strategies focussing sustainable delivery actions within our communities and places.

- 6.2 This policy contributes objectives within the Supporting Sustainable Tenancies Strategy, specifically objective 17 which targets the provision of tailored interventions to sustain tenancies, improve health and wellbeing, and maintain independence. A key delivery action within this Objective is the provision of personalised aids and adaptations, embracing new and emerging digital solutions to facilitate independent living and sustain tenancies.
- 6.3 The policy also contributes to objective 21 within the Providing Sustainable Quality Sustainable Homes Strategy to provide homes that are safe, exceed the needs and meet the aspirations of our tenants. A key delivery action within this objective is the delivery of investment which provides tenants with choice and is focused on the areas which matter to them most.

## 7.0 Legislative and regulatory framework

### Relevant legislation

- 7.1 This policy is aligned to relevant regulations and legislation in supporting the provision of aids and adaptations to tenants in need, including supporting the local authority statutory responsibilities in relation to adaptation. Key legislative and regulatory requirements include, but are not limited to, those set out below:

- The Care Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005
- The Disabled Facilities Grant (England) Order 2008
- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 SI2002/1860
- The NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- The Children Act 2004
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Person Act 1970
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2023

### Regulatory framework

- 7.2 The Regulator of Social Housing's Safey and Quality Standard sets out the required outcomes Registered Providers must achieve and includes a specific requirement in relation to adaptations:

#### **Adaptations**

##### **Required Outcomes**

1.5.1 Registered providers must assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services.

##### **Specific Expectations**

2.4.1 Registered providers must clearly communicate to tenants and relevant organisations how they will assist tenants seeking housing adaptations services.

2.4.2 Registered providers must co-operate with tenants, appropriate local authority departments and other relevant organisations so that a housing adaptations service is available to tenants where appropriate.

- 7.3 Additionally the Tenancy Standard sets out the requirements to support Local Authorities to meet their statutory duty to meet local housing need and to provide support to tenants who are under-occupying their homes, as well as those who are overcrowded.

## **2 Specific expectations**

### **2.1 Allocations and lettings**

2.1.1 Registered providers must co-operate with local authorities' strategic housing functions and assist local authorities to fulfil their duties to meet identified local housing need. This includes assistance with local authorities' homelessness duties, and through meeting obligations in nominations agreements.

2.1.3 Registered providers must develop and deliver services that seek to address under-occupation and overcrowding in their homes. These services should be focused on the needs of tenants.

- 7.4 The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard sets out requirements in relation to treating tenants with fairness and respect and ensuring fair and equitable access and outcomes of services.

### **1. Required outcomes**

#### **1.1 Fairness and respect**

1.1.1 Registered providers must treat tenants and prospective tenants with fairness and respect.

#### **1.2 Diverse needs**

1.2.1 In relation to the housing and landlord services they provide, registered providers must take action to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for tenants and, where relevant, prospective tenants.

## **8.0 Policy statements**

- 8.1 We will facilitate the provision of personalised aids and adaptations to homes where this will directly improve your quality of life and/or that of your household, meeting current and future need.
- 8.2 We will take a holistic and person-centred approach, understanding your aspirations and housing needs, to provide tailored solutions to enable sustainable, independent living whilst ensuring that any aids and adaptations create accessible, sustainable homes.
- 8.3 We will work in partnership with Local Authorities to understand their housing strategies and local housing needs assessments.
- 8.4 We will only consider major adaptations to our homes following a recommendation by an Occupational Therapist. When assessing major adaptations to our homes, the following considerations will inform our decision, working jointly with you and your household to consider your specific needs:

- Prior to considering a major adaptation, we will work with you to consider whether this is the most appropriate, equitable and cost-effective way to sustain independent living and assess other support needs, including supporting moves to larger, or more appropriate accommodation.
- Where older tenants under occupying family accommodation request a major adaptation, we will provide support and advice to enable you to access more appropriate accommodation (e.g. bungalow / ground floor flat). We will prioritise and support you downsizing into more sustainable accommodation and freeing up family accommodation for those in housing need.
- A referral will be reclassified as 'urgent' if the absence of the recommended adaptation presents an immediate and significant health and safety risk to the recipient, confirmed by a health professional and/or occupational therapist (assessed on an individual case by case basis), which include conditions such as:
  - A confirmed diagnosis of a terminal condition or
  - A confirmed diagnosis of a progressive, degenerative neurological and/or life limiting condition.

- 8.5 We will communicate effectively with you, prior to, during and after a major adaptation to your home. We will understand your communication needs and, where appropriate, make reasonable adjustments to support you. We will keep you informed of timescales for your adaptation and will follow up on completion of the works to check you fully understand your adaptation and how to make most effective use to enable independent living.
- 8.6 We will work in partnership with Local Authorities delivering major adaptations to our homes through Disabled Facilities Grant and via the Home Improvement Agency to ensure you receive timely communication and are kept up to date with the status of your adaptation to effectively manage your expectations.
- 8.7 We will ensure our homes are utilised in the most effective way to meet housing need. This work will include referrals for minor adaptations to facilitate a hospital discharge for tenants, which will be given priority for completion up to 48 hours prior to discharge, coordinating with appropriate statutory services and health professionals.
- 8.8 We will raise awareness of the availability of the Aids and Adaptations Service throughout the lifetime of a tenancy.
- 8.9 We will maintain accurate and up-to-date asset management data with relevant information on all major aids and adaptations within our homes. We will utilise this data, and other complimentary datasets such as age, disability, or health condition, to inform service delivery, service improvement and the implementation of new services that meet the needs of our tenants now and in the future.

### Service Standards

- 8.10 Standard minor adaptations will have a target for completion within 30 calendar days depending on the adaptation required.
- 8.11 Major adaptations undertaken by Livin will have a maximum target of 90 days for completion, which includes the time required for the relevant surveys to be carried out and the adaptation, which is often bespoke, to be installed.

## Retention and reuse

- 8.12 We retain minor adaptations and major adaptations, such as permanent ramps and wet rooms, when an adapted home is vacated and becomes void. We will replace adaptations with a like for like replacement, as required, once the adaptation cannot be economically repaired and would not ordinarily remove aids and adaptations.
- 8.13 We will advertise vacant homes with existing adaptations and, in accordance with relevant Allocations Policies and Nomination Agreements, seek to ensure the properties are allocated to those applicants with specific need of the adaptation.

## Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

- 8.14 Requests for major adaptation works exceeding £1,000 will be referred to the relevant Local Authority for assessment. Any work will be considered under their Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) schemes. The Local Authority has discretion to cover up to 100% of the cost of any adaptations up to £30,000 in value. Where appropriate we will pay a tenant's contribution to ensure they are not disadvantaged.

## Exclusions

- 8.15 We will not undertake these adaptations as part of the service:
- Play safe areas inside the home.
  - All garden or landscaping works.
- 8.16 We will consider requests for additional adaptations, which may fall outside the remit of statutory services (usually defined by DFG criteria) on a case-by-case basis to ensure our response is tailored to individual circumstances. These include, and are not limited to:
- Mobility Scooter access and storage
  - Vehicular access
  - Hard standings and driveways
  - Play safe areas outside the home
  - Access to the garden
  - Additional / improved fencing (where this contributes to improved safety or wellbeing)

## Refusal to Carry Out Major Adaptations

- 8.17 We will assess all recommendations, including those from the Local Authority, to ensure works are reasonable and practical. In some cases, we may refuse to carry out works if:
- The structure/build or design of the home cannot accommodate the adaptations required.
  - There is a suitable alternative home, which could be offered.
  - The adaptation works will impact the ability to re-let the home for its intended purpose e.g. family accommodation.
  - The tenant has moved from a home already suitably adapted to meet their needs.
  - The adaptation may not meet the future long-term needs of the tenant.

- The property is likely to be subject to an asset solutions appraisal or regeneration.
- The tenant has applied to purchase the property through the relevant Right to Buy or Right to Acquire process.

8.18 When an adaptation is not possible the support needs and geographical preferences of the tenant will be considered, and we will endeavour to support access to alternative accommodation that meets their needs.

### Review of Decisions

8.19 Tenants have the right to appeal against a decision to refuse an adaptation; decisions in relation to any appeal will be clearly communicated by the decision maker verbally (where possible) and in writing. Appeals should be made to the Housing Manager in the first instance and will be considered by the Head of Housing in circumstances where the Housing Manager has been involved in the original decision. Appeal results will be provided (in writing) within 10 working days of receipt.

8.20 For decisions made by a Local Authority regarding major adaptations, the tenant will be signposted to the relevant department within that LA. We will not accept complaints where we are not the decision maker.

### Complaints

8.21 Customers are able provide feedback about the services they have received in respect of this policy. If a customer is dissatisfied with the service they have received from us, they can make a complaint to us in line with our Customer Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Policy.

8.22 Specifically, we define a customer complaint as:

“Any expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own employees, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or groups of residents.”

## **9.0 Roles and responsibilities**

9.1 Roles and responsibilities under this policy are outlined below.

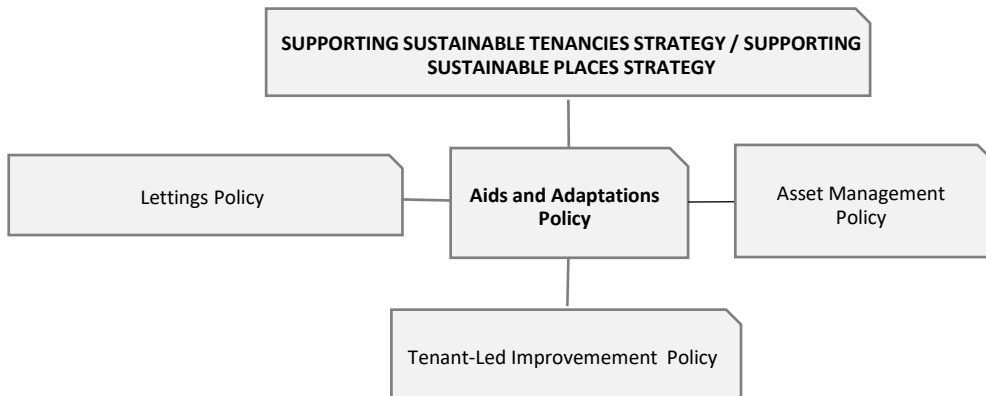
<b>Housing and Communities Committee</b>	The Housing and Communities Committee (H&CC) has overall governance responsibility for this policy. H&CC will formally approve this policy, assure itself that the policy is effectively delivered and review it at least every three years, or earlier if there is a relevant change in legislation or regulation.
<b>Director of Housing and Communities</b>	The Director of Housing and Communities has strategic responsibility for the housing management services which deliver this policy. They will oversee the implementation of this policy.
<b>Head of Property Services</b>	The Head of Property Services is responsible for the delivery of an effective and efficient repairs and maintenance service which includes aids and adaptations to tenant homes.



<b>Head of Housing</b>	The Head of Housing is responsible for joining up the strategic and operational actions to monitor compliance and ensure effective delivery of the policy.
<b>Strategic Housing Manager</b> <b>Housing Manager</b> <b>Repairs and Maintenance Manager</b> <b>Occupational Therapist</b>	Responsible for the day-to-day delivery, management, and monitoring of the policy across the departmental procedural framework.  Responsible for the performance management framework associated with the various aspects of the policy to demonstrate the positive impact on place and sustainability

## 10.0 Related policies

10.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:



## 11.0 Monitoring and review arrangements

11.1 This policy will be communicated to relevant employees and training will be provided to ensure understanding of the policy requirements. Employees will be supported in delivery of the policy within an appropriate procedural framework that provides management oversight and assurance that actions undertaken are delivered within this procedural framework.

### Assurance

11.2 Assurance on compliance with this policy will be gained via a range of methods, as set out in the following table:

Type of assurance	Key source	Frequency
Management assurance	Quality assurance monitoring case management (CX Case Review and BI Dashboard shows all work in progress and status)	Monthly

	<p>Performance metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of tenants satisfied with the Aids and Adaptations Service</li> <li>• Percentage of minor adaptations carried out within 30 days</li> <li>• Percentage of major adaptations carried out within 90 days</li> </ul>	Quarterly
Corporate Oversight	Housing Services Progress Report to Housing and Communities Committee	Six monthly
Independent assurance	Internal audit of this Policy	Periodic independent audit

11.3 This policy will be reviewed every three years, unless there is significant development that would require a more urgent review e.g. new legislation or regulation.