

Aids and Adaptations Policy

Responsible Officer	Assistant Director Housing
This policy is applicable to	Karbon Homes Limited and Leazes Homes Limited (not including other subsidiaries)
Approved by	Executive
Date approved	9 th April 2024
Frequency of review	Every 3 years
Date of next review	April 2027
Implementation date	April 2024
Key related documents (policy, procedure, customer literature)	Aids and Adaptations procedures and appendices
Sources of best practice or guidance used in developing this policy	See section 22.

Version control			
Version number	2	Author of Policy	Paul Wailes (Supported Housing Services Team Manager)
Equality Impact Analysis	Yes	Equality Analysis Date	January 2024

Document change history		
Version	Date	Changed sections
2.1	07/01/2024	Update of 'applicable to' section of policy header to include Leazes Homes Limited

Consultation	
Consultation Group (if applicable)	Date of Consultation (if applicable)
Staff	18/10/23
Union(s)	Not applicable.
Customers	18/09/23 Strategic Residents Group
Human Resources / Organisation Development	Not applicable.
Health and Safety Working Group	Not applicable.
Other stakeholder (please state)	Not applicable.

Policy statement

We are committed to providing a high quality aids and adaptations service to enable residents to live safely and more independently within their homes, through efficient management of resources and funding.

We recognise that there may be local differences in the funding of minor and major adaptations and Karbon will always work with our local authority partners to ensure provision of adaptations as swiftly and efficiently as possible to promote independent living.

Each application will be reviewed on its own merit/circumstances when considering permission requests for our customers.

Risk policy is designed to control

This policy is designed to control a number of reputational and financial risks considered to be minor.

Key performance measures

- The number of minor and major adaptations undertaken each financial year (recorded by customer/area/timescales/diversity information where collected) to be kept and reported to KMT.
- Customer satisfaction of the service will be monitored & reported to KMT.

Definitions

See sections 3 & 4

1.0 Purpose of policy

1.1 This policy sets out our approach to Aids and Adaptations. It gives direction on how we will deal with requests for aids and adaptations, either directly or in partnership with the appropriate local authority. We firmly believe that adapted, accessible housing - alongside housing-related support – can reduce the cost of health and social care through hospital admissions or residential care.

1.2 A specific expectation in Safety and Quality Standard States:

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

1.3 This policy must be read in conjunction with the Aids and Adaptations procedure and associated appendices.

2.0 Objectives

2.1 We commit to funding and undertaking adaptations, both independently and in partnership with other agencies to ensure that residents can maintain their independence in their home. In cases where the funding is above Karbon's policy limit we will ensure to refer the request to the relevant local authority for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding.

We will:

- Ensure that there is a consistent approach to assessing and carrying out minor and major adaptations to suitable properties. Work closely with our local authority partners to access the services of Occupational Therapists (OTs) and Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) where appropriate and ensure clear lines of communication and joint working practices.
- Signpost customers on how to apply for Aids & Adaptations and provide advice and guidance to customers when applying for minor and major adaptations.
- Endeavour to work with our customers and their families, partners and contractors to innovate and provide unique solutions to Aids & Adaptations.
- Keep a record of all adapted properties & warranties in our housing management system.
- Actively promote the Aids and Adaptations service to customers and other permanent members of the household so that they are aware of all the options open to them when accessing the service.
- Ensure that we make best use of our existing housing stock.
- Comply with legal, regulatory requirements and good practice in relation to the provision of Aids and Adaptations.
- Ensure all requests will be assessed on the basis of whether they are reasonable, necessary, appropriate and practicable. Our approach will be guided by Equality legislation & Equality Act 2010.
- Recycle adaptations where appropriate to do so.

2.2 Timescales

Code	Working Days	Description	Type of Aid / Adaptation job.
AA1	2	Minor 2 working days	Rapid Response adaptations to facilitate hospital discharges
AA2	5	Minor 5 working days	Minor adaptations such as grab rails, key safes drop down shower seats
AA3	20	Routine 20 working days	Larger minor adaptations that require fabrication*
AA4	60	Major 60 working days	All other Major works

* Certain fabrication jobs may exceed 20 days depending on the nature of the job (Fabrication is the construction of items from different parts using at least one of a range of processes and materials).

3.0 Aids

- 3.1 An aid is a piece of equipment which is portable and not permanently fixed to your home. They are provided to a property/customer to improve access to a home, improve mobility in and around a home or help with daily living.
- 3.2 Aids are provided by local authorities through their equipment loan service. The service provides equipment on loan to people who are elderly, ill or have a disability.

Equipment is offered following an assessment of need which must be carried out by a recognised professional (such as an Occupational Therapist/Social Worker/District Nurse).

- 3.3 An aid will always be considered as a first option before any major adaptations are recommended. Examples of Aids are: Chair risers, perching stools, toilet frames and bathing equipment.
- 3.4 This equipment, where possible to do so, will be issued free of charge by the local authority to the customer on a loan basis and is to be returned to be recycled when no longer required. Aids are not provided by Karbon Homes.

4.0 Adaptations

Adaptations fall into two main categories; major and minor.

4.1 Major Adaptations

- 4.1.1 Major adaptations are works that cost more than £1000 (reviewed annually in line with best practice). Karbon Homes will refer requests for major adaptations through to the relevant local authority for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). A DFG is the main form of assistance available from the Local Authority to allow a disabled person to live independently or to be cared for at home. The grant, which is mandatory, is subject to a test of resources.
- 4.1.2 Major adaptations will not be undertaken to properties where the customer is seeking rehousing, has made a right to buy/acquire application or other circumstances that would nullify the benefit of adapting the property.
- 4.1.3 It is important to consider the needs of the customer. However, consideration should also be given to the suitability of the property, the scope of the proposed adaptations and the future allocation of the property.
- 4.1.4 When permission is granted, we will work in partnership with the appropriate local authority to ensure the provision of major adaptations. We will record all decision making on our housing management system.

4.2 Minor Adaptations

- 4.2.1 Karbon Homes will undertake minor adaptation works up to the cost of £1000.
- 4.2.2 Priority adaptations (key safes, grab rails and lever taps) will be processed by the adaptations team at the first point of contact with the resident or referring body.
- 4.2.3 In some circumstances minor adaptations will require an assessment by an Occupational Therapist.

5.0 Ramps, Drop Kerbs and Vehicle Hard Standings

- 5.1 External ramps and vehicle hard standings are a major adaptation which may be installed following an assessment by an Occupational Therapist to help permanent wheelchair users, and where the wheelchair has been prescribed by Wheelchair Services (NHS). This will be installed and funded by Karbon Homes where the cost is below £1000. All requests in excess of this amount will be referred to the local

authority for DFG application. Alternatively, customers have the right to request permission to self-fund such adaptations.

- 5.2 Any external ramps installed must meet all building regulations requirements and/or standards. The standards at the time of writing this policy are the Protection from falling, collision and impact: Approved Document K and Access to and use of buildings: Approved Document M. The above documents do not apply to mobility scooters.
- 5.3 We cannot provide dropped kerbs on adopted highways and the customer will be signposted to their local Council's Highways Department for information.
- 5.4 We will consider an Occupational Therapist recommendation for the provision of ramps where the customer or other permanent member of the household is a wheelchair user and are not able to access and egress their home safely. It is not guaranteed that a ramp will fall within minor adaptations limit of £1000. A survey will be arranged to determine if the Occupational Therapist's recommendation is classed as a Major or Minor Adaptation to determine the funding route,

6.0 Mobility Scooters and Self-Purchased Wheelchairs

- 6.1 We will not provide adaptations (e.g. ramps, vehicle hard standings, door alterations, path alterations and storage facilities) for customers or permanent members of the household with a mobility scooter or a self-purchased wheelchair.
- 6.2 Should a customer wish to undertake their own alterations they will need to seek written Permission from their Surveyor within Karbon Property Services Team.

7.0 Door Entry Systems & Assistive Technology

- 7.1 We will consider an Occupational Therapist recommendation for the provision of door entry systems. If, following a full assessment by the Adaptations Team and the door entry system is approved (and within minor budget of £1000), we will arrange and fund the installation of the system and Karbon will be responsible for arranging servicing and repairs of the equipment. There is often a charge associated for the ongoing maintenance of the equipment which will be passed onto the customer as a service charge. This will be discussed and agreed before the initial installation has taken place.
- 7.2 We recognise the vital role of assistive technology in improving the quality of life for our residents. We do not directly provide assistive technology as part of our adaptations service at present but will signpost customers where possible to access local services within their area.

8.0 Specialist Toilets

- 8.1 We will consider an Occupational Therapist recommendation for the provision of specialist toilets. If, following a full assessment by the Housing Services Team and the specialist toilet is approved (and within minor budget of £1000), we will arrange and fund the installation. Some specialist toilets may be required to be serviced. This will be arranged via Karbon and will incur ongoing servicing and maintenance costs which is the tenants responsibility.

9.0 Sensory Loss

- 9.1 Customers or other permanent members of the household with sensory loss should seek advice from the Sensory Support Team within the local authority. Any recommendation received that will assist the customer will be considered by the Adaptations Team. If the works are deemed appropriate, we will arrange the fitting of any items of specialist equipment that are within the £1000 limit, or seek to grant permission for DFG funded equipment to be installed for those over £1000.

10.0 Eligibility Criteria

- 10.1 In order to be eligible for an adaptation an applicant must meet the following criteria:
- The property must be the customer's principal home and not of a temporary nature.
 - The person requiring the adaptation must be the customer, or their partner, or a member of the immediate family, who is a permanent resident of the household or would be if the adaptation was undertaken.
 - Leaseholders must seek permission to make adaptations to their homes at their own cost. Permission may be granted if they can provide a copy of a report and associated recommendation from an occupational therapist (unless the adaptation will have a significant detrimental effect on our assets and/or other customers or leaseholders).
 - We reserve the right not to adapt a home within the first 12 months of a tenancy (e.g. if a customer accepted a property and knew their pre-existing condition would make it unsuitable for their needs).
 - Communal Adaptations are not carried out by the Adaptations team unless they qualify for a DFG. Each case is awarded on its own merit depending on the circumstances of the individual and suitability for the dwelling.

11.0 Rehousing

- 11.1 Where appropriate we will offer a customer a move to a more suitable and/or adapted property via a Direct Let (In association with our Allocations and Lettings Policy), that better meets their long term needs and those of their family members.
- 11.2 We are committed to providing value for money to our customers. Upon consideration we may not support adaptations where appropriate alternative accommodation has been identified which meets an individual/families housing needs. We reserve the right to refuse significant adaptations where a reasonable alternative property is available, or likely to become available and where we feel that the proposed works are inappropriate to the property concerned. Customers will be given the appropriate priority for rehousing on medical grounds and best use of stock.
- 11.3 In order to maximise the use of our adapted properties and provide an excellent service to our customers, we will, where reasonably possible in the lettings process, match adapted properties to customers whose needs require adaptations.
- 11.4 Major adaptations will not be undertaken to properties where the customer is seeking rehousing, made a right to buy/acquire application or other circumstances that would nullify the benefit of adapting the property.
- 11.5 Usually, if a customer chooses to move from a property that has been fully adapted for their physical needs, no further adaptations will be undertaken to the new property, if these adaptations were available at the previous property. These criteria will not apply where a customer has been decanted from an adapted property.

12.0 Occupational Therapists (OTs)

- 12.1 It may be necessary to ask an OT to provide additional information to support a request for an adaptation or to assess the customer's specific needs.
- 12.2 Most works in bathrooms to aid bathing will require an assessment from an Occupational Therapist to ensure that the adaptations are fit for purpose and to minimise any risk.

13.0 Maintenance, Repairs and Service Charges

- 13.1 On the expiry of a warranty, we will undertake repairs and maintenance to adaptations installed by the Local Authority which become part of the fixtures and fittings of the property (where this is economically viable to do so). Where a level access shower is fitted into the property then we will take full responsibility for the fixture as this becomes a key component of the property. We may introduce a service charge for servicing and maintenance where appropriate, depending on the adaptation and servicing routine.
- 13.2 Karbon will only take responsibility for maintenance and repairs if all of the operation and maintenance manuals are provided, together with copies of all installation/repair/service certificates to prove it has been maintained in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations.

14.0 Planned Maintenance and Improvement Programmes

- 14.1 When we are planning improvement programmes, conversions, new build or environmental schemes, we will consider the incorporation of adaptations as part of the works.

15.0 Recycling Adaptations

- 15.1 Where it is possible and practical to do so, we will reuse equipment that has become redundant in its current situation, such as stairlifts and metal ramping systems.

16.0 Complaints

- 16.1 Any complaints with regards to the Aids & Adaptations service will be considered in line with the Karbon Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy and Procedure and will be handled in accordance with the timescales laid out within the policy.

17.0 Customer Vulnerabilities

- 17.1 This policy is applied in line with Our Approach To Vulnerability Policy. Everyone matters. We want people to be treated fairly, have equality of opportunities, freedom, respect, and access to our services. We will offer support, reasonable adjustments, and adaptations to remove barriers. We will discuss with our customers what is reasonable and appropriate. In delivering this service we may need to escalate a particular case – if we do then customer vulnerabilities will be considered as part of the decision-making process.
- 17.2 We will support people with vulnerabilities to deliver this service. We will work alongside external agencies such as social services, the police and fire services

and other appropriate agencies to help and support people with vulnerabilities in the delivery of our services but also to ensure we meet our statutory and regulatory requirements as a social landlord. Details are provided in the appropriate areas in this policy. All our customer policies are available on the website.

18.0 Monitoring and Review

- 18.1 The policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless there are changes to legislation/regulation.

19.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 19.1 This policy is applied in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy and the associated legislation including the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010 where we aim to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and define the nine protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- 19.2 Our approach to equality and diversity goes beyond these protected characteristics we take into consideration additional factors such as socio-economic status and language barriers which may also impact individuals. Our vision is one where everyone is treated fairly, have equality of opportunities, freedom, respect and access to our services.
- 19.3 All of our Karbon policies and key information are made available on the Karbon Homes website. Other reasonable adjustments that can help to make our information and services more accessible are sign language and language interpreters. We will work to improve accessibility for everybody that we deal with offering reasonable adjustments, adaptations and discussing ways that we can work to remove any barriers that you may experience. A reasonable adjustment involves making a change to the way that we usually do things.

20.0 Data Protection and Privacy

- 20.1 We have a clear policy on data protection and sharing data with other partners/third parties under the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation the Data Protection Act 2018 and other associated legislation. This is clearly set out in the Data Protection Policy for the Karbon Homes Group which, along with its associated procedures, must be followed throughout the operation of this policy.

21.0 References

- 21.1 In developing this policy, relevant legislative requirements, best practice and related standards have been examined including:
- NHS & Community Care Act 1990
 - Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995
 - Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000
 - Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
 - Children Act 1989
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Public Sector Equality Duty
 - Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

- Care Act 2014
- Aids and Adaptations Toolkit, HQN.
- Home adaptations for disabled people: a detailed guide to related legislation, guidance and good practice.
- Housing Associations and Home Adaptations: Making it work smoothly, Habinteg 2008.
- College of Occupational Therapist's Guide; 'Minor adaptations without Delay'.
- Disabled Facilities Grant Guidance (DCLG, 2007).
- Customer Service Standards.
- Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy.
- Mobility Vehicle Policy.
- Regulatory Standards.
- Allocations and Lettings Policy