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Providing a strong foundation for life.

AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY

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Unrestricted

Aids and Adaptations Policy

Responsible Officer	Group Director Housing
This policy is applicable to	Karbon Group
Policy version	3
Date this version implemented	September 2026
Date of next review	September 2029

Policy Statement

The Karbon Homes Group (the Group) is committed to helping customers live safely, independently, and comfortably in their homes by providing access to aids and adaptations. We work closely with local authorities, Occupational Therapists (OTs), and other partners to ensure customers receive appropriate support as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The policy explains how requests for adaptations are assessed and delivered. Every request is considered on its individual circumstances and will be assessed to ensure it is reasonable, necessary, appropriate, and practical. The Group is committed to providing a fair and consistent service while making the best use of available resources and housing stock.

Aids, such as bathing equipment, toilet frames, and perching stools, are generally provided by local authority equipment services following a professional assessment. Adaptations are separated into minor and major works. The Group funds and delivers minor adaptations costing up to £1,000, including items such as grab rails, key safes, and shower seats. Major adaptations costing more than £1,000 are usually considered through a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) provided by the relevant local authority.

The policy sets clear service standards, including target timescales for completing different types of work. Where appropriate, the Group may recommend rehousing to a more suitable or already adapted property if this better meets a customer's long-term needs and provides the best value for customers.

The Group is committed to treating customers fairly and in line with equality and inclusion principles. Support is available for customers in vulnerable circumstances, and information can be provided in alternative formats or languages on request. Customers who are unhappy with any aspect of the service can raise concerns through the organisation’s Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions process.

Overall, this policy aims to support independence, improve accessibility, promote wellbeing, and ensure customers can access the adaptations they need to live safely in their homes.

Risk the policy is designed to control

4. Customer Service & Satisfaction - Failure of the Group to keep its promises to customers by meeting its customer service and TSM targets.

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 KLT.
- Customer satisfaction of the service will be monitored and reported to KLT

Definitions

See section 3.

Abbreviations

DFG	Disabled Facilities Grant
OT	Occupational Therapist

Policy Detail

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 customers 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.

1.4 Principles

Karbon Homes will seek to balance customer independence, accessibility, equality of opportunity, effective use of resources, and the long-term management of housing stock when making decisions relating to aids and adaptations.

This principle helps justify many of the later decisions around rechargeability, cultural adaptations, baths in wet rooms, and specialist equipment. It gives a clear policy basis if any decisions are challenged.

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 the Group's policy limit we will ensure to refer the request to the relevant local authority for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding.

2.2 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 DFG where appropriate and ensure clear lines of communication and joint working practices.

- Work proactively with local authority partners, Occupational Therapists and Disabled Facilities Grant teams to minimise delays in assessments, approvals and the delivery of adaptations, ensuring customers receive timely support to meet their assessed needs.

- 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.

- Maintain accurate records of adapted properties, including adaptation types, warranties and servicing requirements, to support effective asset management and future allocation of homes to customers whose needs can be met by existing adaptations.

- 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 including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled residents

- Recycle adaptations where appropriate to do so.

2.3 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 Policy detail

3.1 Aids

3.1.1 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.

3.1.2 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 OT/Social Worker/District Nurse).

3.1.3 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.

3.1.4 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 the Group.

3.2 Adaptations

3.2.1 Adaptations fall into two main categories; major and minor.

<u>Major Adaptations</u>

Major adaptations are works that cost more than £1000 (reviewed annually in line with best practice). The Group will refer requests for major adaptations through to the relevant local authority for a 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.

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.

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.

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.

Minor Adaptations

The Group will undertake minor adaptation works up to the cost of £1000.

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.

In some circumstances minor adaptations will require an assessment by an OT.

3.3 Ramps, Drop Kerbs and Vehicle Hard Standings

3.3.1 External ramps and vehicle hard standings are a major adaptation which may be installed following an assessment by an OT to help permanent wheelchair users, and where the wheelchair has been prescribed by Wheelchair Services (NHS). This will be installed and funded by the Group 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.

3.3.2 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.

3.3.3 We cannot provide dropped kerbs on adopted highways and the customer will be signposted to their local Council's Highways Department for information.

3.3.4 We will consider an OT 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 OT's recommendation is classed as a Major or Minor Adaptation to determine the funding route.

3.4 Mobility Scooters and Self-Purchased Wheelchairs

3.4.1 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.

3.4.2 Should a customer wish to undertake their own alterations they will need to seek written Permission from their Surveyor within the Property Services Team.

3.5 Door Entry Systems & Assistive Technology

3.5.1 We will consider an OT 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 the Group 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.

3.5.2 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.

3.6 Specialist Toilets

3.6.1 We will consider an OT 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 the Group and will incur ongoing servicing and maintenance costs which is the customers responsibility.

- Standard specialist toilet seats and associated equipment below the Association's adaptation cost threshold will normally be provided through Occupational Therapy Services or directly by Karbon Homes, subject to assessment and approval.
- Wash and dry toilets will only be considered where a qualified OT has assessed the equipment as necessary and appropriate and where the property is suitable for installation.
- During the manufacturer's warranty period, servicing, maintenance, and repairs will be managed in accordance with the warranty arrangements.
- Following expiry of the warranty period, ongoing maintenance responsibilities will be determined in accordance with Karbon Homes' asset management arrangements and available resources.
- Where a wash and dry toilet reaches the end of its serviceable life, replacement will be subject to a further assessment of need. Alternative funding sources, including Disabled Facilities Grants, may be explored irrespective of how the original installation was funded.

3.7 Sensory Loss

3.7.1 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.

3.8 Eligibility Criteria

3.8.1 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 OT (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). Each case will be considered individually taking account of disability-related needs and reasonable adjustment requirements.
- 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.

3.9 Adaptations Without Delay

3.9.1 In line with the principles of the Adaptations Without Delay approach, Karbon Homes will seek to complete appropriate low-complexity adaptations within five working days wherever reasonably practicable.

3.9.2 Adaptations most likely to fall within this approach will generally be straightforward works where the need is clear, the solution is readily identifiable, and delay may increase risk or reduce the customer's independence.

3.9.3 Where an adaptation is required to address an immediate health and safety concern, support hospital discharge, or reduce significant risk, Karbon Homes will work with relevant partners to identify and implement the most appropriate solution as quickly as possible.

3.9.4 Any delays arising from access issues, incomplete referrals, landlord consent requirements, funding decisions, procurement timescales, specialist equipment,

statutory permissions, or technical constraints will be recorded and managed proactively.

3.10 Key Safes

3.10.1 Karbon Homes may install key safes where they are assessed as necessary to facilitate access for care, support, or essential services.

3.10.2 Customers are responsible for retaining, recording, and securely managing key safe access codes.

3.10.3 Replacement key safes required as a result of forgotten, lost, or unrecorded access codes may not be provided at Karbon Homes' expense and may be rechargeable to the customer.

3.11 Cultural Adaptations

3.11.1 Karbon Homes recognises that, in certain circumstances, customers may request adaptations which support cultural, religious, or customary practices within the home.

3.11.2 Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must demonstrate a clear and evidenced need.

3.11.3 Approval will be subject to the proposal being technically feasible, proportionate in cost, compliant with relevant legislation and health and safety requirements, and appropriate to the type, tenure, and anticipated future use of the property.

3.11.4 In reaching a decision, Karbon Homes will balance individual requirements with the effective use of resources, equality considerations, and the long-term sustainability of the housing stock.

3.12 Baths within Existing Wet Rooms

3.12.1 Karbon Homes will not normally install baths within existing wet room facilities.

3.12.2 Requests for a bath to be installed within an existing wet room will only be considered where supported by a recommendation from a qualified OT.

3.12.3 Any proposal must demonstrate that the bath can be safely accommodated without adversely affecting accessibility, drainage performance, future adaptation potential, or compliance with relevant standards.

3.12.4 Approval will be subject to the works being technically achievable, representing value for money, and being deliverable within the approved budget.

3.13 Rehousing

3.13.1 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.

3.13.2 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.

3.13.3 In order to maximise the use of our adapted housing stock and provide an excellent service to our customers, we will maintain accurate records of adapted properties and, where reasonably possible, ensure that homes with existing adaptations are allocated to customers whose assessed needs can be met by those adaptations

3.13.4 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.

3.13.5 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.

3.14 Occupational Therapists (OTs)

3.14.1 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.

3.14.2 Most works in bathrooms to aid bathing will require an assessment from an OT to ensure that the adaptations are fit for purpose and to minimise any risk.

3.15 Maintenance, Repairs and Service Charges

3.15.1 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.

3.15.2 The Group 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 manufacturer’s recommendations.

3.16 Rechargeable Adaptation Works

3.16.1 Karbon Homes may recharge customers for reasonable costs incurred in relation to adaptation works, replacements, or remedial works where a request is withdrawn, access is repeatedly refused, or works are declined after materials have been ordered or bespoke equipment has been manufactured.

3.16.2 Each case will be considered individually, taking account of the customer's circumstances, vulnerability, communication needs, equality considerations, and the reasons for any refusal, cancellation, or failure to provide access.

3.16.3 Recharges will not normally be applied where delays, cancellations, or refusals arise from circumstances outside the customer's reasonable control.

3.17 Planned Maintenance and Improvement Programmes

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

3.18 Recycling Adaptations

3.18.1 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.

3.19 Complaints & Communications

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

3.20 Customer Communication

3.20.1 We will provide customers with clear and timely information throughout the adaptations process. This will include explaining expected timescales, key stages of the process, any delays that arise, and the options available to challenge decisions, raise concerns or submit a complaint.

4.0 Customer Vulnerabilities

4.1 This policy is applied in line with our Customers in Vulnerable Circumstances Policy. We want people to be treated fairly, have equality of opportunities, freedom, respect, and access to our services.

4.2 We will support people in vulnerable circumstances to help us 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 in

vulnerable circumstances and to ensure we meet our statutory and regulatory requirements as a social landlord.

4.3 Policies and key information are made available on our website.

5.0 Monitoring and Review

5.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Group Director of Housing, unless there are changes to relevant legislation, regulation or best practice.

6.0 Equality and Diversity

6.1 This policy is applied in line with our Inclusion and Belonging Policy. This includes the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010, Workers Protection Act 2023 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

6.2 At the Group we aim to eliminate discrimination, promote 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.

6.3 If you would like this or any other policies in a different language or format please contact inclusion@karbonhomes.co.uk.

7.0 Data Protection and Privacy

7.1 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 Group which, along with its associated procedures, must be followed throughout the operation of this policy.