

Policy title:	Adaptations Policy		
Scope:	Aspire Housing		
Policy owner (job title):	Head of Neighbourhoods and Head of Assets & Sustainability		
Approver (job title):	Executive Director of People		
Date:	30/09/2025	Review Due Date:	30/09/2028

1. POLICY SUMMARY

- 1.1 This policy aims to ensure that Aspire Housing meets its legal and regulatory obligations to ensure the effective delivery of adaptations whilst supporting tenants to remain independent and safe in the most appropriate home.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all properties within Aspire stock that fall within the Regulator for Social Housing standards where Aspire has a repair responsibility.
- 1.3 This policy sets out our approach to major and minor adaptations and how we will fulfil Aspire Housing's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. We will do this by providing an efficient and effective adaptation service that provides value for money and meets individual needs.

2. LEGAL & REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

- 2.1 The Regulator of Social Housing expects social housing providers to make provision for adaptations under the Consumer Standards.
- 2.2 Safety and Quality Standard - Adaptations
 - Registered providers must clearly communicate to tenants and relevant organisations how they will assist tenants seeking housing adaptations services.
 - 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.
- 2.3 Tenancy Standard - Allocations and lettings
 - Registered providers must seek to allocate homes that are designated, designed, or adapted to meet specific needs in a way that is compatible with the purpose of the housing.
- 2.4 To comply with the new consumer standards, we will recognise diverse needs. Considering the needs of those households who are

vulnerable by reason of age, disability or illness, and households with children. We will assist tenants seeking adaptations and cooperate with relevant local authorities.

2.5 The Legislation and Regulations applicable to this policy are:

- The Housing Act of 1985 & 2004
- The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Care Act 2014 (Section 1)
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The Housing Renewal Grants (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2014
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 & 2019
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing, in particular Consumer Standards - “Safety and Quality” (Adaptations) & “Tenancy” (Allocations and Lettings)

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Adaptations - Any additions or adjustments to a property that can assist a customer or a member of the household with the movement around their homes and completing everyday tasks.

3.2 Disability - The Equality Act 2010 describes a disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on a person’s ability to do normal daily activities.

3.3 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) - A grant that may be available from your Local Council to fund adaptations to your home, if you’re disabled and need to make changes to your home.

3.4 Major Adaptations - A major adaptation is the provision of fixed equipment and/or a modification to a property where an identified need within the household has been determined by a medical professional, usually an OT. It does not include the provision of portable equipment. These could include:

- Fitting a stairlift or through floor lift
- Ceiling Hoists
- Level Access showers or wet rooms

Major Adaptation will comprise work that meets the DFG criteria and should approval be granted by Aspire the local authority will instruct a contractor to carry out the works, typically over the value of £1000.00.

3.5 Minor Adaptations - A minor adaptation is the provision of fixed equipment and/or a modification to a property where an identified need within the household has been determined by preset criteria and /or Aspire staff. These could include:

- Grab rails
- Kitchen/bathroom lever taps
- External door threshold ramps

Minor adaptations comprise completed works that do not meet the DFG criteria. They are provided to all Aspire Housing customers (where we have a repair responsibility) and a need has been identified. Examples of minor work include lever taps, grab rails, and handrails, typically under the value of £1000.00

3.6 Occupational Therapist (OT) - A health care professional who engages with customers to assess their requirements to live a full and active life. The Care Act 2014 statutory guidance specifically states that assessments can be conducted by key professionals, such as OTs, as these assessors would be appropriately trained to provide a comprehensive assessment.

4. OUR APPROACH TO ADAPTATIONS

4.1 This policy applies to all customers and registered household members living in a home where Aspire is responsible for repair. Leasehold and Shared Ownership properties have the right to make a DFG application.

4.2 Eligibility - A request for adaptations will only be considered if the disabled person is the sole or joint tenant, or their partner or a member of the immediate family who is currently occupying the property. The request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

4.3 Exclusions - Unless it is a reasonable adjustment request by a disabled person which will be considered in line with section 5, Aspire may not otherwise approve and fund minor adaptations or give consent to DFG applications for homes (or rooms) which:

Minor Adaptation	Major Adaptation
Have a live Right to Acquire application	Have no record of the subject of the application being a resident in the relevant home

Are residential or commercial leaseholders	Are under occupied (case-by-case review)
Are not owned by Aspire Housing	Are above ground floor and are only accessible via a stairwell
Are shared ownership	Are in a communal area
Have a tenancy breach in place (case by case review)	Means DFG test has excluded adaptation request from funding
Are in a communal area	The needs of the household could be more reasonably satisfied by the customer transferring to a more suitable home provided by Aspire or other registered providers
Have no record of the subject of the application being resident in the relevant home	Works are not appropriate for the structure of the property or appear unreasonable
Are under occupying	Works do not represent value for money and is cost prohibitive
Are above ground floor	The adaptation is principally to reduce overcrowding caused by the customer's change in circumstance since being granted their tenancy
Works are not appropriate for the structure of the property or appear unreasonable	Works are to be undertaken by the customer or their contractor (these requests can be considered via Customer Alteration Request procedure)
Works do not represent value for money and is cost prohibitive	
The adaptation is principally to reduce overcrowding caused by the customer's change in circumstance since being granted their tenancy	

4.4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS - Aspire aims to make the best use of its stock and therefore, rehousing will be discussed with customers in cases requiring a major adaptation if the existing property does not meet their long-term needs. Arrangements can be made for customers to move to alternate more suitable accommodation if that is their wish.

Where customers refuse to move, we will support the Aspire customer to identify more suitable accommodation as appropriate through working with the Occupational Therapy service, the customer or other representative of the customer.

Where the customer is not open to this support we will work with the OT to look at interim support which can be given.

4.5 Aspire will publicise our obligations regarding adaptations, so you know how you can apply for an adaptation and who is responsible.

4.6 Minor Adaptation requests do not require an OT assessment and can be made directly by the customer or a member of their household. Aspire will fund and carry out minor adaptations, described in section 2 'Definitions', this work will be instructed and managed by Aspire staff.

4.7 Major adaptations will not be funded by Aspire and customers will need to contact Social Care and Health for them to do an Assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT). Local Authorities have a statutory duty to aid with major adaptations through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). The customer will need to make an application for funding to the appropriate Local Authority. We are committed to supporting the provision of adaptations through DFGs, where appropriate, to enable you to maintain independence in your home.

4.8 Aspire will consider, on a case-by-case basis, the provision of 'top up' funding up to a maximum of £5,000 where the DFG maximum funding level is exceeded, to enable the delivery of major adaptation work to a property where this is deemed the most appropriate route to meet customer needs. Homeowners including shared ownership and leaseholders are not eligible for this contribution.

4.9 Where a DFG is approved by the Local Authority, Aspire has the right to refuse permission for the works and all major adaptations to the property need to be approved by Aspire before they are carried out. We reserve the right to refuse permission for any adaptation which is a health and safety or fire risk, or conflicts with any of our policies/procedures.

4.10 Aspire have no direct influence on the timescales for processing and completing DFG's but will support customers and escalate delay concerns to the Local Authority on behalf of the customer. Following major adaptation works customers are expected to remain in the Aspire property for a minimum of five years, in line with the governments DFG eligibility criteria. The rent of the property may be reviewed following an adaptation if the work completed have resulted in an extra room.

5 REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

5.1 Some requests for adaptations might also amount to requests to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act to Aspire as the "controller of let premises".

5.2 The Controller of let premises is either the landlord or “a person who manages let premises” so can include Aspire even when we are only the managing agent. We would always then need to liaise with and seek consent from the landlord.

5.3 Leasehold and shared ownership properties are also covered by the duty to make reasonable adjustments when we are the landlord or managing agent. This is because the definition of “Let premises” in the Equality Act includes both leases and tenancies.

5.4 We are required to consider making reasonable adjustments to premises when we get a “trigger request”. That means:

- We receive a request (which does not have to be in writing)
- The request is from a tenant or another person who is disabled who is entitled to occupy the premises e.g. a member of the tenant’s household. The person making the request does not need to be disabled.
- We are the landlord or manage the let premises.
- The reasonable adjustments request asks for
 - o steps to be taken or
 - o an auxiliary aid provided to avoid the substantial disadvantage a disabled person suffers in either enjoying the premises or making use of a benefit or facility they are entitled to under their lease or tenancy
- We cannot however be required to remove or alter a “physical feature”

5.5 When considering if there is a substantial disadvantage, this must be a disadvantage that is more than minor or trivial. The comparator is with a non-disabled person.

5.6 In determining whether the request is reasonable we will consider the guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission that advises that the following should be considered:

- Whether the change can actually be made
- The cost
- Our size and our resources.

5.7 A Physical feature does not include signs or notices, taps or door handles, doorbells or door entry systems, changes to colours of walls, doors or other surfaces, chattels, equipment or furniture furnishing or materials.

Examples include:

- We could be required to alter the volume of a door entry bell inside the flat for a tenant who is deaf.
- A request to change a bath to a walk-in shower would be a change to a “fixture” which is a physical feature we do not have to remove or alter.
- A request to change a front door to widen the doorway for a mobility scooter or wheelchair access would be a request to alter a physical feature and would again be refused.

5.8 There is no current obligation in force to make reasonable adjustments to common parts of let premises. For example, a request for reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act to a door entry system because it is too high for a tenant in a wheelchair to reach could not cover the system in the common parts or outside doors. It could however cover the part of the door entry system on the flat front door or inside the flat.

5.9 Costs. We cannot charge the occupier for a reasonable adjustment we agree we are required to carry out.

6 ALLOCATION OF ADAPTED HOMES

6.1 Upon tenancy termination, customers are required to remove all electrical adaptations and make good the property. Aspire Housing will make every effort to reallocate an adapted home to a customer who will benefit from its particular features and will include making direct matches where appropriate.

6.2 Aspire will reallocate adapted homes in the most cost-effective manner and avoid removing adaptations wherever possible.

6.3 Aspire will assist with the transfer of a family or partner remaining in a substantially adapted or purpose-built property where the disabled person is no longer resident.

6.4 Where an applicant is assessed for a new home Aspires approach will be to follow current allocation process to ensure suitability of the property to the applicant's needs.

6.5 Where an adaptation is request for a New Build home which is within the 12-month defect liability period, this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure the property is suitable for the individual need.

7 RECYCLING AND REMOVAL OF ADAPTATIONS

7.1 When a property becomes empty, following a termination of a tenancy, Aspire will try to avoid the removal of the adaptation, if this is not practical then it will be recycled where feasible and appropriate.

8 WARRANTIES AND MAINTENANCE

8.1 In properties managed and controlled by Aspire where vertical lifts, domestic step lifts or domestic hoists are present and supplied, maintained, and inspected by other parties, Aspire will require LOLER certification to be provided. Aspire will remain in contact with the responsible persons for these lifts and if at any

point they cease to service them and or pass responsibility to the householders, Aspire will assume that responsibility on behalf of Aspire customers.

8.2 Customers are required to provide access to their properties to enable Aspire to comply with this policy and landlord responsibilities under HSWA 1974 and LTA 1985. Failure to provide access to ensure the safety of residents will result in appropriate action being taken which may include, but is not limited to, the removal or decommissioning of the relevant equipment.

8.3 Permanent fixtures such as kitchens and wet rooms will be maintained by Aspire Housing once the initial warranty is completed.

8.4 All adaptations will be updated into the asset management database following completion.

9 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

9.1 This policy has been considered against our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. We recognise and value the diversity of our customers and we aim to continually review and improve the service we offer customers. We aim to reduce barriers to ensure that everyone has equal access to our services, including those set out in this policy and are committed to treating everyone fairly, complying with all relevant legislation under the Equality Act 2010.

9.2 Where people have specific needs to access the policy, or progress a matter via the policy, reasonable support would be given. By way of example, this may include the provision of the policy in alternate forms e.g. braille, large print, audio versions, digital, hard copy, telephone, preferred language etc and ensuring that the process followed was reasonably adapted to reflect the needs of the individual.

9.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed on this policy.

10 RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEE

10.1 To comply with the policy, attend training and seek advice where necessary.

10.2 To encourage and support customers to carefully consider all the options available to meet their needs, signposting where necessary, including the option to offer relocation to a property better suited to meet a customer's needs.

11 RESPONSIBILITY OF ASPIRE

11.1 Aspire will ensure that there are procedures and processes in place together with training as appropriate to ensure the successful implementation of this policy.

11.2 To monitor the impact of this policy and ensure that it continues to facilitate the effective delivery of adaptations that support customers to remain independent and safe in the most appropriate home for their needs.

12 ASSOCIATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

- Allocations Policy (Joint)
- Tenancy Policy
- Adaptations Procedure Guide
- Tenant Private Works Policy
- Leasehold Management Policy
- Repairs Maintenance and Improvement Policy
- Rent Setting & Service Charging Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Customer Home Alteration Policy
- Lifting Equipment Policy

13 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

13.1 Any feedback will be considered in line with our Customer Feedback Policy.

13.2 Customer satisfaction surveys will be monitored according to Customer Feedback Policy. We will be sending transactional surveys when adaptation works have been completed and use the feedback to monitor service delivery and consider if any improvements are required.