

# Aids and Adaptations Policy – PS007

## 1. Policy Principles

- 1.1 bpha is committed to providing a high-quality aids and adaptations service to enable disabled tenants of the association to live safely and more independently within their homes, through efficient management of resources and funding.
- 1.2 This policy applies to disabled persons who are permanent tenants of bpha rented accommodation. and who require aids and adaptations within their home.

## 2. How we Deliver the Aids and Adaptations Policy

- 2.1 bpha will:
  - ensure that the needs of disabled tenants are prioritised and met accordingly, subject to the provision of available funding
  - set out the criteria by which the association will assess all requests for adaptation work and identify limitations to the service
  - maximise all local authority grants, bpha's own funding and other available resources for adaptations, having high regard for Value for Money (VFM) at all times
  - manage the expectations of tenants who require adaptations with the association's duty to manage its housing stock effectively through its corporate strategies
  - ensure there are clear channels of communication and established joint working practices with our partners from the local authorities in the areas where we operate
  - comply with legal and statutory requirements in relation to the provision of disabled adaptations
  - comply with good practice guidance
- 2.2 All aids and adaptations work undertaken by bpha will only be carried out as a result of an assessment by the Occupational Therapist (OT) to determine eligibility and both short/long term medical needs. If the tenant does not have an OT, they will be advised to contact their Local Authority, as an assessment of their disability is required. Any appeal of the OT assessment should be addressed to the Local Authority.
- 2.3 We work with Social Services to ensure timely and accurate information is communicated to tenants.
- 2.4 The OT's assessment determines the urgency of the adaptation work required. Whilst guided by this, bpha will also work to ensure a balance between both priority, need and time spent on the waiting list.

## 3. Definitions

- 3.1 For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:
  - 3.1.1 **Adaptation:** using the social model of disability, an adaptation is a modification to a disabling environment or structures 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.
  - 3.1.2 **Minor and Major Adaptations:** adaptations are split into two categories – minor and major. These distinctions are based on the nature of the work required in order to implement the adaptation and do not correspond to the impact the adaptation will have on the individual requiring such work. It is

understood that both minor and major adaptation work can impact significantly on an individual's quality of life. Examples of the types of work categorised as either minor or major:

<b>Minor Adaptations</b> (typically, under £1,000):	<b>Major Adaptations</b> (over £1,000 but capped at £5,000) require more extensive and complex work:
Lever taps Grab rails Half step Mopstick rails Drop down Devon rails Electronic window openings	Straight stair lifts Over bath showers Electronic door openings Ramps Hoists

3.1.3 **Disabled Person:** The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a disabled person as: 'Someone with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his / her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' This adverse effect is both substantial and long term.

## 4. Policy Statement

### 4.1 Financial Considerations

4.1.1 The financing of bpha funded adaptations will be capped at £5,000 per property. This cap is for the financial year 2020/21 and is reviewed annually. bpha will seek to maximise funding through the Local Authority Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for adaptations that cost more than £5,000; these applications will follow the principles of best practice in regard to DFG and Value for Money.

4.1.2 Subject to availability, funding for aids and adaptations work will be met from the following sources:

- **Minor Aids and Adaptations**
  - Aids and adaptations costing £1,000 or less will be funded by the association's own annual aids and adaptations budget. A means test does not apply to minor aids and adaptations. bpha will aim to ensure that minor works are completed within 6 weeks from receipt of the Occupational Therapist's report.
- **Major Adaptations**
  - Adaptations costing over £1,000 but not exceeding £5,000 will be funded by the association's own major aids and adaptations budget. bpha will ensure that all major adaptations are completed within 18 months from receipt of the Occupational Therapist's report, subject to the absence of applicable government restrictions on working in other people's homes.
  - Adaptations exceeding £5,000 will be funded through the Local Authority Disabled Facilities Grant. Adaptations funded through the Local Authority Disabled Facilities Grant are subject to means testing by the Council. They are also subject to landlord approval from bpha.
  - Some tenants in need of adaptations may also be eligible to apply for other sources of funding, for example ex-HM Forces personnel. The association will ensure that tenants are signposted to appropriate agencies if those bodies might be able to assist with the tenant's contribution or may be able to provide aids and adaptations more quickly.

### 4.2 Feasibility Assessment

4.2.1 bpha will undertake a feasibility assessment in exceptional cases, for example, when the tenant's circumstances are of a complex nature and/or the proposed adaptations may have a very significant impact on the property itself. Upon receipt of the OT referral, the feasibility assessment will be carried out in consultation with the OT along with a representative from our Home Team. The feasibility assessment will seek to establish:

- if there is a possibility of more suitable accommodation being available for the tenant.

- the effect the adaptation works will have to the ability to re-let the accommodation.
- whether the adaptation works are suitable for the tenant.
- whether the adaptation works are feasible in relation to the layout and structure of the property.
- whether the estimated cost of the adaptation work is likely to exceed the Local Authority's maximum grant provision.

### 4.3 Transfer to Suitable Alternative Accommodation

- 4.3.1 It may be decided that the tenant's needs are best met through a transfer to another property. This decision would be made by the Tenant Services Manager and Occupational Therapy Manager in consultation with the tenant. A priority transfer within bpha's stock would be approved under the bpha Allocations Policy and/or a priority move to another Registered Provider may be arranged. The Occupational Therapist will be consulted on the suitability of a proposed property.
- 4.3.2 Adaptations will not be carried out to a property where it is under-occupied by two bedrooms or more. In these circumstances bpha will look to move tenants to a more suitable property. Couples who need separate bedrooms for medical reasons will not be adversely affected by this rule and bpha will seek advice from medical professionals in such cases.
- 4.3.3 In general, the association does not purchase adapted properties or properties suitable for adaptations on the open market.
- 4.3.4 Where it has been identified that a move to a more suitable property is both reasonable and practicable, the association reserves the right to refuse approval for the adaptations requested for the original home. The Head of Housing Operations or Head of Property Services or the Head of Retirement Living will make this decision and such decisions will be final. The OT will be consulted on the suitability of the proposed alternative home.

### 4.4 Completed Aids and Adaptations Work

- 4.4.1 All aids and adaptations work completed in a property will be recorded as part of the property details. Wherever practical, this information will be used to ensure that any future allocations are made to applicants requiring such adaptations.
- 4.4.2 If a Local Authority wished to develop a Disabled Housing Register, either locally or sub-regionally, to facilitate the matching of disabled tenants with properties suitably adapted for their needs, bpha will work with them to do so.
- 4.4.3 Information on the needs and requirements of disabled applicants will also be utilised to inform any subsequent development programmes.

### 4.5 Maintenance Obligations

- 4.5.1 Clos-o-Mat toilets and through-floor lifts are maintained by bpha and are subject to a service charge. Service charges may or may not be eligible for payment under Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.
- 4.5.2 Following the 12-month warranty period the repairs and maintenance of a stairlift or hoist will be the responsibility of the tenant.
- 4.5.3 If Housing Benefit or Universal Credit do not cover a service charge, or if repairs and maintenance of a stairlift or hoist are a concern, tenants will be referred to bpha's Money Advice Team.

### 4.6 Future Transfers and Mutual Exchanges

- 4.6.1 If tenants for whom the association or local authority has undertaken adaptations wish to transfer or mutual exchange to another property, it is at the association's discretion to determine whether such a move can take place. This decision is taken by the Allocations Manager in accordance with relevant housing legislation. Each case will be reviewed individually to take into account personal circumstances and will include consultation with the tenant.

4.6.2 We will advise tenants for whom we undertake adaptations that we may refuse to carry out adaptations to successive dwellings unless there is an overriding need to move, for example overcrowding.

## 4.7 Claiming Back an Adapted Property

4.7.1 In accordance with housing legislation, bpha has the right to claim back properties with major adaptations in the event that the person requiring the adaptation did not take up occupation or the occupants are no longer making full use of the adaptations; for example, if the property was acquired through succession (the taking over of a property/tenancy upon the death of the former tenant) or the tenant making use of the adaptations found alternative accommodation.

## 5. Associated Legislation, National Standards and Regulations

- 5.1 'Delivering Housing Adaptations for Disabled People: A Detailed Guide to Related Legislation, Guidance and Good Practice' Issued by The Home Adaptations Consortium 2013.
- 5.2 Equality Act 2010 (Section 36(1)(a), Paragraph 2, Schedule 4, and Section 190)
- 5.3 The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (sections 1 and 2)
- 5.4 The Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (Section 23)
- 5.5 Local Authority Allocation Schemes
- 5.6 Disability Discrimination Act 1995

## 6. Monitoring, Reviews & Evaluation

- 6.1 In order to monitor the quality of the overall service, we will periodically ask tenants who have benefited from the aids and adaptations service to complete a satisfaction survey.
- 6.2 The Tenants Services Manager is responsible for the aids and adaptations budget. Performance against budget and target timescales will be reported to the ELT on a monthly basis.

<b>Approved by</b>	Senior Management Team
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<b>Owner</b>	Head of Property Services
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