

Accessible Homes (Aids & Adaptations) Policy	
Approved by Director of Housing	Issue number 9
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Previous Version N/A	Responsible Officer Head of Asset Management and Sustainability

1.	Aims and Objectives
1.1	Hightown aims to meet the needs of its tenants for independence, privacy and dignity and recognises that this may be achieved in some circumstances through adaptation of their home. We recognise the benefits that adaptations can bring in enabling residents to remain independent and living in their own home.
1.2	This policy sets out our approach to requests for aids and adaptations.
1.3	The aims of this policy are to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services We assist tenants, where possible, to remain in their own homes and communities through support with the provision of aids and adaptations Tenants applying for aids and adaptations are treated in a fair and equitable way
2.	Definitions and Scope
2.1	This policy applies to residents of rented properties owned by Hightown. It does not apply to freeholders, leaseholders or shared owners, but we will offer advice to these residents should they require it.
2.2	Aids and adaptations are alterations or improvements carried out to a resident with a disability's home or communal area to enable them to continue to carry out day to day activities.
2.3	Adaptations are categorised as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor adaptations costing up to £1,000 including, but not limited to, internal door threshold ramps, lever taps, grab rails, moving door handles and power sockets. Major adaptations costing over £1,000 or involving structural or layout alterations to the property including, but not limited to, provision of lifting aids, stair lift installation, level-access showers and installation of a wet room.

<p>2.4</p> <p>2.5</p> <p>2.6</p> <p>2.7</p> <p>2.8</p>	<p>Disability is defined under the Equality Act 2010 as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. 'Substantial' is more than minor or trivial e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task. 'Long-term' means 12 months or more, however a person will automatically meet the disability definition from the day they are diagnosed with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis.</p> <p>Occupational Therapists (OT) are health care professionals specialising in the promotion of a person's ability to fulfil daily routines and tasks. Following receipt of a referral, the OT will carry out an assessment of the need for aids and adaptations in the resident's home.</p> <p>The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is 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.</p> <p>A Home Improvement Agency (HIA) provides a range of services to help older people, people with disabilities and vulnerable people live safely and independently in their homes.</p> <p>The defect liability period is the period following practical completion of a new development where the building contractor is responsible for dealing with identified defects.</p>
<p>3.</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.1.1</p> <p>3.1.2</p> <p>3.1.3</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.2.1</p> <p>3.2.2</p> <p>3.2.3</p> <p>3.2.4</p>	<p>Policy Statement</p> <p><u>Minor Adaptations</u></p> <p>Requests for minor adaptations may be received from residents, relatives, carers, friends Occupational Therapists, hospitals, GPs, social workers, or Hightown staff.</p> <p>Hightown will install most minor adaptations on request from tenants without the need for an Occupational Therapist (OT) report. Where relevant, requests for minor adaptations may need to be supported by appropriate evidence, such as a letter from a medical practitioner. A full OT assessment may be requested in some circumstances and the Property Service Manager will determine when this is necessary.</p> <p>The responsive repairs maintenance budget will fund minor adaptations.</p> <p><u>Major Adaptations</u></p> <p>Requests for major adaptations must be accompanied by an OT report and recommendation which specifies the adaptations required.</p> <p>Hightown will assess the feasibility of the works and ascertain whether permission can be granted.</p> <p>For all major aids and adaptations, we ask residents to apply to their Local Authority for a DFG to cover the costs. Where reasonable, we may offer assistance in making the application and work with the Local Authority to achieve the best solution for the resident. Where a DFG is awarded, the resident may be required to contribute towards the cost of the work, irrespective of the value.</p> <p>If the Local Authority does not award a DFG, or the allocated grant is insufficient to cover the cost of the works, Hightown may also consider contributing towards the cost</p>

	<p>of the work. IN these circumstances, a cross-departmental meeting should be held with all relevant internal and external agencies to discuss the best course of action. An assessment of options for alternative housing may be required.</p> <p>3.2.5 Hightown will reclaim VAT where it is exempt.</p> <p>3.2.6 The funding body may take full responsibility for procuring the work or ask us to obtain quotations and employ our own contractors. Where the funding body procures the work, Hightown will require certification of the suitability and competence of the engaged contractor, and the all works are in compliance with the current standards and requirements in place at the time.</p> <p>3.3 <u>Adaptations to Communal Areas</u></p> <p>3.3.1 Requests for adaptations in communal areas are considered on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>3.3.2 Hightown will respond to requests from residents for adaptations to communal areas; identifying areas that could be made wheelchair accessible by means of minor alterations and no major structural changes, and having regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The needs of existing tenants and service users with limited mobility. • Programmed refurbishment work. </p> <p>3.4 <u>Declining requests and temporary adaptations</u></p> <p>3.4.1 We decline requests for aids and adaptations in the following circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where it is not physically possible to alter the property in the way that has been requested. • the aid/adaptation would involve extensive structural works. • the adaptation would present a health and safety risk. • we believe the adaptation is not an effective use of resources or best value for money. • to permit the adaptation would result in Hightown incurring excessive and/or unsustainable repair or maintenance obligations. • in newly built properties, where the adaptation would invalidate any existing guarantees or warranties. <p>Such decisions will be based on individual needs and circumstances and will be made at our discretion to do what is best for the tenant. In these situations, we will work with the tenant and where appropriate the OT and Local Authority to consider other options such as suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>Hightown does not carry out temporary aids and adaptations. Adaptations will be recycled where possible by letting already adapted properties to households with similar needs. Only in rare circumstances would Hightown remove the adaptation.</p> </p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Legal/Regulatory Background</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 Human Rights Act 1998 Fire Safety Act 2021 Building Safety Act 2022 Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 The Regulator of Social Housing's Safety and Quality Standard 2024</p>

6.	Role and Responsibilities/Authority Overall responsibility for implementation, monitoring, reviewing and managing this policy lies with the Head of Asset Management and Sustainability.
7.	Policy/document References: Accessible Homes (Aids & Adaptations) procedure Allocations and Lettings policy