



HONEYCOMB
GROUP

Aids and Adaptations Policy

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| Who's this for? | Honeycomb Group – Staffs Housing; Concrete; Glow |
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| Owner (Executive Lead) | Executive Director of Operations |
| Approved by | Executive Team 19 June 2024 |

1. Introduction and purpose

This policy sets out how Honeycomb Group (HG) will approach provision of aids and adaptations to customers in our rented homes. It describes our aims, outlines the approach we will take to specific aspects of the service, and details our service standards.

Separate policies set out our approaches to:

- Property & maintenance policy
- Planned maintenance policy
- HG health & safety policy

2. Policy aims and objectives

We aim to support provision of aids and adaptations where our customers or family members named on the tenancy agreement face difficulty in doing everyday tasks due to the configuration of the home and an adaptation could help them live more comfortably, safely, and independently.

To ensure these aims are met, we will:

- Set clear expectations with staff and contractors around provision of aids and adaptations.
- Ensure statutory and regulatory obligations are met.
- Work closely with customers, their representatives, and professionals supporting them, to ensure we understand and respond to their specific needs.
- Communicate clearly with customers during application and installation processes.
- Offer choice and flexibility to customers around provision of adaptations.
- Maintain accurate records on contact with customers and delivery partners.
- Have in place effective quality control and compliance processes.
- Monitor and report on service delivery and performance regularly, and use insights gained to inform our processes, contract management, training etc as well as to ensure adaptations targets are met.
- Contact customers in planned ways to gather feedback on their experiences, perceptions and expectations of our services.
- Consider formal and informal feedback provided through complaints and compliments alongside performance information and customer survey data.
- Ensure procurement of materials and suppliers is through suitable supply chains that can deliver an appropriate balance on quality, durability and price.
- Record any adaptations within the property at the void inspection stage and review the condition.
- Maintain accurate records on adaptations provided and ensure alignment with repairs service, plans and lettings.
- Work with private landlords across our Charity property portfolio to ensure that any aids and adaptations are in line with the relevant lease and or management agreements.

3. Policy detail

Definition of aids and adaptations

Aids and adaptations are changes to a home, or specialist equipment, that make it easier for customers or their family members to move around the home and do day to day tasks.

Examples of minor adaptations include:

- Grab rails
- Banister rails
- Lever taps
- Raised sockets

Examples of major adaptations include:

- Door intercoms
- Level access showers
- Stair lifts
- Wheelchair ramps

Mobility and living aids are designed to help with daily activities such as:

- Mobility, walking and getting around
- Eating and drinking
- Cooking and preparing food
- Dressing and grooming
- Bathing, bathroom and toilet facilities
- Hobbies.

4. Application for adaptations

Customers, their family members, a carer or social care/health professional can apply for an adaptation to a HG property by:

- Telephone: 0330 094 8878
- Email: hello@honeycombgroup.org.uk

We will request that an adaptations permissions form is completed, either digitally or on paper, for customers to request any adaptation by HG, or request permission for adaptation work to be assessed or paid for by themselves, the local authority or a third party. For example, HG receive referrals from Medequip (after the NHS has referred our customers to them) for permission for work to be done in a HG property.

Permission must be sought for all adaptations, regardless of how they are to be paid for.

Permission will not be unreasonably withheld. Where it cannot be given, HG will provide a clear explanation and work with the tenant to consider alternative options. Examples of where permission may not be given include:

- Adaptations are not able to meet needs
- The cost is prohibitive
- Planning or building regulations cannot be complied with
- The property is not suitable for the adaptations required
- HG does not own the property.

HG has a small budget that can fund a low level of minor adaptations such as hand grab rails and low counters. We are unable to fund major adaptations.

Customers can apply to their local authority for a Disabled Facilities Grant to fund major adaptations. They can also pay for works directly.

Customers must not modify their property or arrange a Disabled Facilities Grant without written permission from HG to carry out the works. If there are planning or building regulations requirements relating the works, permission must be gained, and copies provided to HG.

HG data protection policy must be followed during operation of this policy and in delivery of our adaptations service.

It is important to note that for Honeycomb Charitable Services (Concrete and Glow) that the nature of the accommodation is temporary and not intended to be a permanent home. Therefore, a pragmatic and reasonable decision will be made on the appropriateness of any aid and adaptation requests.

5. Occupational therapy assessment

An occupational therapist working with the local authority must assess all requests for major adaptations, and HG cannot support installation of adaptations without this.

The occupational therapy assessment will involve a visit to the home and will assess current and potential future needs. A course of action will then be recommended.

6. Fitting adaptations

We will aim to complete works for non-emergency minor adaptations within four weeks of permission being granted (this may be longer if the property is not owned by HG and therefore landlord permission may have to be sought). A longer period may be required for specialist products to be sourced.

HG cannot itself carry out works for major adaptations. Timescales for major adaptations are dependent on the work to be undertaken and should be discussed with the service provider carrying out the work.

7. When a property is not suitable for adaptation

Sometimes a property may not be suitable for adaptation. This may be due to the size, layout or location of the home, or because a lot of adaptations would be required to meet needs.

In such circumstances HG will work with customers and the occupational therapist to consider other possible options that could meet the customer's needs, including move to another property.

8. Repairs and maintenance of adaptations

HG will maintain minor adaptations that we fund and fit.

Any passenger lift and stairlifts are checked and maintained by HG.

Other major adaptations, such as therapy baths and beds, are the customer's property and therefore their responsibility to maintain.

HG will not fund or arrange repairs or servicing to adaptations, such as hoists or any other electronic equipment, where we did not provide the equipment.

9. Letting homes with adaptations

We will review the condition and type of adaptations in a void property to check they are fit for purpose. The Property and Neighbourhoods Teams will work together to see if the property can be let to a customer who requires an adapted home that fits their needs.

The allocation of properties for the Charity will be dealt with by the respective team.

10. Removal and recycling of adaptations

Customers should notify HG if adaptations fitted at the property are no longer required.

HG may be able to remove adaptations and make them available for use by other households.

When a property becomes void, checks will be made and if the adaptations are not fit for purpose they will be removed. If the property cannot be matched up and allocated for a new customer, the adaptations will be removed after careful consideration and review by the Head of Property and Head of Customer & Neighbourhoods. Void rent loss needs to be kept to a minimum during this review period.

11. Access to aids

Some care trusts provide equipment to help with health and social needs. This will usually be loaned and should be returned when it is no longer required.

Local authority adult social care departments will be able to help with access to an occupational therapist or social worker where customers want to buy equipment or need advice on what would be most helpful. HG does not provide aids. We will ensure customers are assisted to access their provision where the need arises. HG will signpost to local authorities, GPs, and health care providers.

12. Service standards

Adaptations can be requested by phone, email, letter or in person.

Contact details for all methods of requesting adaptations will be displayed clearly online. Adaptations will be dealt with within stated timescales as follows:

| Category | Definition | Timescale |
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| Emergency request for minor adaptation | Smaller projects where there is an immediate risk of harm to people e.g. unable to return home from hospital; restricted access to running water | Within 24 hours (working week) where possible |
| Routine request for minor adaptation | Smaller projects where there is a quality of life issue but no immediate risk of harm to people | Within 4 weeks (excluding specialist equipment) of approval where possible |
| Fitting of minor adaptation | | Within 4 weeks (excluding specialist equipment) of approval where possible. |

We will be proactive in dealing with local authorities and others and will communicate regularly with customers about their application.

Customers will be contacted by telephone and/or text to notify them of adaptations appointment times, and a reminder will be sent in advance of our contractor's arrival.

We will offer the facility for customers to specify an appointment day and a preference for an am or pm appointment for fitting of adaptations, between 8am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.

If our team cannot gain access to a property for an agreed adaptations appointment, they will leave a card advising the customer to arrange another appointment. Customers will also be contacted via telephone/text, or email upon request.

13. Adaptations Data Collection & Information Management

Data for major component adaptations will be recorded on our housing system, such as lift, adapted kitchen. We will gather data from the following to ensure our records are kept up to date:

- Void inspections and void property records
- Baseline data through the permissions process for an adaptation e.g. via a customer, care liaison representative
- Compliance visits such as lift and hoist inspections

14. Customer feedback and complaints

Customer complaints about adaptations services will be handled in line with our complaints policy.

Complaints relating to adaptations will be monitored and used, individually and in aggregate, to refine and improve our services and performance.

15. Performance monitoring and compliance

We will monitor the delivery of our adaptations service and report to operational staff, our leadership and executive team, the Board, and our customers. Key performance indicators will be used to monitor and report performance, as well as complaints and compliments received, including any customer surveys. This allows us to be accountable for our service delivery, identify any trends which require intervention, and focus on delivery of the objectives stated above.

We will report against indicators developed for internal use by staff in conjunction with customers.

16. Data protection and confidentiality

For processing, storing and sharing the personal data associated with this policy, we will ensure that it is carried out in accordance with current data protection legislation (UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018).

17. Review

This policy shall be reviewed every three years, and a review may be required earlier if there is a legislative or regulatory requirement or significant change.

June 2024