



# **SW9 CH Aids and Adaptations Policy**

**January 2025**

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 This policy applies to residents living in properties managed by SW9 CH Community Housing ('SW9 CH'). Procedures are in place to support the implementation of this policy for residents in our properties; these procedures are captured in this document.

## 2. Aims and objectives

2.1 The key objectives of the Aids and Adaptations Policy are:

- To ensure that the needs of disabled residents are prioritised and met accordingly, subject to the provision of available funding.
- To set out the criteria by which SW9 CH will assess all requests for adaptation work and identify any limitations to the service.
- To maximise all local authority grants, SW9 CH's own funding and other available resources for adaptations, having high regard for value for money (VFM) at all times.
- To balance the expectations of residents who require adaptations with SW9 CH's duty to manage its housing stock effectively.
- To ensure there are clear channels of communication and established joint working practices with our partners from the local authorities in the areas we operate.
- To comply with legal and statutory requirements in relation to the provision of disabled adaptations.
- Under the Equality Act 2010, we are expected to make 'reasonable adjustments' to services if a failure to do so would make it impossible or extremely difficult for a disabled person to access the service. We cannot refuse to provide, or deliberately not provide a service to a disabled person which is offered to other people, unless the refusal for non-provision can be justified. Each application for aids and adaptations will be assessed on a case by case basis.

## 3. Definitions

3.1 For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:

- The Equality Act 2010 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.
- A person may be eligible for help under this policy even if they are not registered as disabled, upon recommendation by an Occupational Therapist ('OT').

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- An adaptation makes modifications to a person’s home to allow them to be able to easily carry out day to day activities and access essential facilities in a dignified way.
- Disabled Facilities Grant (**‘DFG’**); a means tested grant from local authorities if you’re disabled and need to make changes to your home, for example to:
  - Widen doors and install ramps;
  - Improve access to rooms and facilities - e.g. automatic doors, stairlifts, wetrooms or downstairs bathrooms and
  - Adapt lighting controls to make them easier to use.

#### **4. Policy Statement**

- 4.1 SW9 CH is committed to providing a high-quality aids and adaptations service to enable disabled residents of the association to live safely and more independently within their homes, through efficient management of resources and funding.
- 4.2 SW9 CH will fund an OT referred Minor adaptation requests up to £1000. This is subject to budget availability and reviewed annually, following the principles of best practice for Value for Money. Minor adaptations may include:
- Grab rails;
  - Adapted toilets; and
  - Steps into and out of property, including ramps.
- 4.3 SW9 CH is not responsible for funding works above the value of £1000. These works are funded by the Local Authority. The delivery of these works can be undertaken by the Local Authority or SW9 CH depending on the works required and availability of contractors.
- 4.4 For value for money purposes, it may be considered preferable for the tenant to be moved to alternative accommodation with aids already in place and/or better suited for the aids and adaptations required. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.5 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG): Tenants or their OT can apply for funding under the Disabled Facilities Grants scheme through their Local Authority.
- 4.6 All aids and adaptations work undertaken by SW9 CH will only be carried out as a result of an assessment by the OT to determine eligibility and both short/long term medical needs. If the resident does not have an OT, they will be advised to contact their Local Authority or GP, as an assessment of their disability is required.
- 4.7 Local authorities may carry out major adaptation works. They will, in most cases, undertake the work using their own contractors after receiving the relevant sign off from SW9 CH. Major adaptations may include:

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- Stairlifts;
- Wet rooms; and
- Through floor lift.

4.8 Applicants must be a named tenant on our Tenancy Agreement or registered on our records as part of the tenant’s household and living at the property on a permanent basis. Where SW9 CH is taking legal action as the person doesn’t have the right to remain in the property, SW9 CH will not make adaptations to the property.

## 5. Feasibility Assessment

5.1 In exceptional cases, for example, when the resident’s circumstances are of a complex nature and/or there is a possibility of the proposed adaptations having a very significant impact on the property itself; SW9 CH will, upon receipt of the OT referral, carry out a feasibility assessment in consultation with the OT along with the responsible SW9 CH Surveyor and a member of the Neighbourhood Services Team.

5.2 The feasibility assessment will seek to establish:

- If there is a possibility for the tenant to be moved to more suitable accommodation;
- The implications of the adaptation work when the property becomes available to re-let, in particular the impact on future allocations and under occupancy issues;
- If the adaptation works are suitable for the tenant;
- The feasibility of the adaptation in relation to the layout and structure of the property. Furthermore, aids and adaptations will not be carried out in scenarios where the adaptation is likely to cause a nuisance to others, for example a stairlift in a communal stairwell;
- If the adaption works includes changing the access and egress to the building; and
- The estimated cost of the adaptation work.

## 6. Applying for Adaptations

6.1 Applications for minor adaptations:

- Once a referral has been received from an OT or other appropriate medical professional (e.g., physiotherapist), we aim to respond within 5 working days;
- We require our referrals to have details such as appropriate measurements to ensure the adaptation meets the resident’s needs;
- When we have all the information, an order will be raised;

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- SW9 CH should call the resident within 72 hours of the order being raised;
- Minor adaptations completed by a contractor should be treated as a priority and completed within 28 days

## 6.2 Application process for major adaptations

- Once a referral has been received from an OT or other appropriate medical professional (e.g., physiotherapist), we aim to respond within 5 working days;
- We require our referrals to have details such as appropriate measurements to ensure the adaptation meets the resident's needs;
- If a major adaptation is required then an application for a DFG will be made by the SW9 CH Surveyor;
- SW9 CH aims to complete their section of the DFG and provide the required letter of consent and proof of tenancy within 5 working days.

## 7. Transfer to Suitable Alternative Accommodation

7.1 SW9 CH do not undertake medical transfers (see SW9 CH Allocations Policy). If residents require medical transfers, the Neighbourhood Services Team will support residents in applying for it through the Local Authority.

7.2 A management transfer (as defined under the Allocations & Lettings Policy) may be approved in some cases, if it is considered that this best meets the needs of the tenant. The OT will be consulted on the suitability of a proposed property, which can be with another registered provider.

7.3 Where it has been identified that a move to a more suitable property is both reasonable and practicable, the organisation reserves the right not to give approval for the adaptations requested

7.4 The Head of Customer Services will make this decision and such decisions will be final. The OT will be consulted on the suitability of the proposed home.

## 8. Completed Aids and Adaptation Work

8.1 All aids and adaptations work completed to a property will be recorded. Wherever practical, this information will be used to ensure that any future allocations are made to applicants requiring such adaptations.

8.2 SW9 CH will supply Local Authorities with information required to assist them with matching disabled resident with a property which is suitably adapted to meet their needs.

8.3 Information on the needs and requirements of disabled applicants may also be utilised to inform any subsequent development programmes.

8.4 All aids and adaptations completed will remain in a property until the end of their life cycle or need.

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8.5 Where level access showers or wet rooms are installed, they may be kept in situ even if future tenants do not require them, as costs of removal and reinstatement of other facilities are significant.

## **9. Maintenance Obligations**

9.1 Following the warranty period the repairs and maintenance of the mechanical adaptation will be the responsibility of SW9 CH. Warranty durations can vary.

9.2 The manufacturers' warranty may apply in the case of major adaptations such as stairlifts. Repairs in these circumstances will have to be directed through the relevant channels, rather than SW9 CH responsive repairs.

9.3 Where approved and considered good value for money SW9 CH may extend warranties at the time of purchase.

9.4 In instances where SW9 CH are responsible for servicing stairlifts, this will be carried out on a six-monthly basis.

## **10. Future Transfers and Mutual Exchanges**

10.1 If residents for whom SW9 CH or a local authority has undertaken adaptations wish to transfer or mutual exchange to another property it is SW9 CH's discretion to determine whether such a move can take place. This is in accordance with relevant housing legislation. Each case will be reviewed individually to take into account personal circumstances and will include consultation with the resident. Under Section 3 of the Housing Act 1985, a landlord may withhold consent under ground 10 , which includes if the property is an adapted or a designated unit.

10.2 SW9 CH reserves the right to refuse to carry out adaptations subject to the level of adaptations required and local authority funding available.

## **11. Succession Requests for Adapted Properties**

11.1 In the event of a request for succession, SW9 CH reserve the right to ask the qualifying tenant to move to another property.

## **12. Performance Monitoring and Responsibilities**

12.1 In order to monitor the quality of the overall service, we will periodically ask residents who have benefited from the aids and adaptations for feedback.

## **13. Related Documents**

13.1 The delivery of the Aids and Adaptations service has operational links to the policies below:

- Equality and Diversity Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Repairs Policy;

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- Mobility Scooter Policy; and
- Parking Policy.

#### **14. Legislation and Regulation**

14.1 The legislation listed in this policy is not intended to cover all legislation applicable to this policy. To meet the required RSH Governance & Financial Viability Standard outcome on adherence to all relevant law, SW9 CH will take reasonable measures to ensure compliance with any and all applicable legislation by reviewing policies and procedures and amending them as appropriate. The legislation listed within this policy was considered at the time of the development of this policy, but subsequent primary and secondary legislation, case law and regulatory or other requirements will be considered and the policy reviewed and adopted in accordance with the requirements set out therein, even should such subsequent legislation not be explicitly listed within this policy. Any queries relating to the applicable legislation should be directed to the policy author.

- The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (sections 1 and 2);
- Section 23 of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996; and
- The Equality Act 2010.

#### **15. Equality and Diversity**

15.1 We will apply this policy consistently and fairly, and will not discriminate against anyone based on any protected characteristics, including those set out in the Equality Act 2010.

#### **16. Review**

16.1 All policies should be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum, or sooner if there is a specific legislative, regulatory or service requirement or change in guidance, law or practice.



<b>Policy author:</b>	<b>Supported Housing Scheme Manager</b>
<b>Policy owner:</b>	<b>Head of Customer Services</b>
<b>Adopted from Network Homes: y/n</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Review schedule (1, 2 or 3 years):</b>	<b>3 years</b>

### Change Record

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reviewed by (name and title)</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>
January 2025	Supported Housing Scheme Manager, Tenancy Support Officer	Final.v2	3 yearly review

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