

## Adaptations Policy

### 1. Aim

- 1.1. We are committed to providing a flexible adaptations service, to help promote the independence, security and dignity of customers' within their own homes.
- 1.2. This Policy applies to all Onward's general needs, specialist living and supported customers and is to be followed by Onward's employees and contractors.

### 2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy does not apply to leasehold and shared ownership customers.

### 3. Definitions

- 3.1. Adaptations are changes to your home to help overcome practical problems when age or disability limits your daily activities or those of your household.
- 3.2. We consider an accessible environment to include access to the main entrance of a property and access to bathing, toilet facilities and a room suitable for sleeping in, facilities for preparing food, the main family room and garden in line with the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and current DFG guidance.
- 3.3. Minor adaptations are items (or work) that are fixed to a property and designed to meet a specific need.
- 3.4. Major adaptations are larger specialist equipment or work.

### 4. Policy details

- 4.1. We aim to make all reasonable adjustments necessary to meet a vulnerable person's needs, where it is possible, practical, and financially prudent/cost effective to do so.
- 4.2. As well as the person's needs, we will consider property type, access, location, future adaptability, occupancy and demand when assessing all major adaptations.
- 4.3. Although level access is not a barrier to major adaptations being approved, tenant's will be notified of future concerns where applicable.
- 4.4. We will only consider adaptations requests for wheelchairs, powerchairs or mobility scooters where these have been provided by a medical professional and are recommended by an OT.

### 5. Eligibility

- 5.1. You must either be a tenant of Onward or a permanent member of an Onward tenants household.
- 5.2. We will consider applications where customers have been matched to properties and have complex adaptation needs that must be completed before they are able to move into the property.

- 5.3. There must be a supporting assessment of need for major adaptations carried out by an Occupational Therapist on behalf of the relevant local authority.
- 5.4. Approval for major adaptation requests is subject to the following conditions being met:
- a) It being financially prudent / cost effective to provide the adaptations recommended and the cost of the adaptations do not exceed 50% of the market value of the property to be adapted.
  - b) The property does not have a potentially limited life such as those in designated clearance areas or is scheduled for major refurbishment.
  - c) The adaptation is not likely to cause an obstruction or pose a potential risk, such as in a communal area.
  - d) The tenant is not actively seeking rehousing or has an active right to buy request.
  - e) Onward is not seeking or considering seeking possession of the property for antisocial behaviour or rent arrears.
  - f) The tenant has agreed to pay any contributions that may be applicable after a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) test of financial means.
  - g) The property is not overcrowded or significantly underoccupied.
- 5.5. We reserve the right to refuse a major adaptation request if one or more of these conditions has not been met.

## **6. Rejections and Appeals**

- 6.1. If an applicant is dissatisfied with our decision to reject an applicant for an adaptation they can make an application to appeal in writing setting out the grounds of their appeal. This will then be considered by the Adaptations Team Leader and/or the Safer Neighbourhoods manager and the tenant will be informed of the outcome of the appeal.
- 6.2. We will share reasons for the rejection of a major adaptation with customers, their representatives Occupational Therapists and Local Authority partners.

## **7. Assessment**

- 7.1. For Minor Adaptations, tenants will be encouraged to self-assess where possible. Members of our team will also provide advice and support if required
- 7.2. For Major Adaptations an Occupational Therapy assessment must be completed by an OT working for the relevant local authority

## **8. Installation**

- 8.1. Onward will work in partnership with the local authority to deliver adaptations to our tenants.
- 8.2. Minor adaptations will be installed by Onward's designated minor adaptations contractors.
- 8.3. Major adaptations will be installed by either a specialist contractor appointed by Onward or a contractor appointed by the local authority.

## **9. Funding**

- 9.1. Minor adaptations will be funded from Onwards own resources, up to a value of £1,500
- 9.2. Major adaptations will be part funded by Onward and when eligible, local authority match funding. These arrangements will depend on the local authority agreement in place.
- 9.3. The relevant Local Authority is responsible for applying for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) on the tenant's behalf to contribute towards the cost of Major Adaptations.
- 9.4. Onward may make applications for DFG funding in exceptional circumstance e.g. to facilitate the letting of homes to customers with complex adaptation needs
- 9.5. Onwards maximum contribution towards any major adaptation will be £10,000 for any cases where our contribution will exceed this approval will be sought from Onwards SLT.
- 9.6. If a tenant is required to pay a contribution as a result of a local authority Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) test of resources, Onward will make an arrangement prior to work starting on site. Onward will not contribute towards tenant eligible costs.
- 9.7. Onward funding will not be made available where an offer of suitable alternative accommodation has been refused by a tenant.
- 9.8. We do not fund vertical lifting equipment

## **10. Rehousing**

- 10.1. If a person has an adaptation need and we are unable to adapt their home as outlined in this policy we will provide advice and assistance to help them find more suitable appropriate accommodation in partnership with the neighbourhood team.

## **11. Replacements/Removals**

- 11.1. We aim to leave in place non-recyclable major adaptations in our properties and utilise our adapted stock by matching them to an applicant's needs.
- 11.2. We will only consider removing a major adaptation if it is beyond repair, the property is no longer occupied by a vulnerable person or where the future demand for the property would be limited with the adaptation.
- 11.3. If a replacement is required as part of our planned maintenance programme or the existing adaptation is beyond repair we will replace the adaptation on a like for like basis, or consider alternatives which will better meet the tenant's needs.

## **12. Servicing and Service Charges**

- 12.1. We will ensure that Customers are aware of any potential future service charge prior to commencing the works. We will set this information out to the customer in writing when agreement in principle has been sent to the local authority.
- 12.2. On expiry of the guarantee period serviceable adaptations such as stair lifts, hoists and bath lifts will be maintained and serviced by one of our approved contractors.
- 12.3. Where tenants have their own service and maintenance arrangements in place tenants will be liable for any repairs carried out on a rechargeable basis
- 12.4. We will apply a service charge to reflect the annual maintenance costs we incur and for which the customer has responsibility to pay.

- 12.5. Service charges will be charged from the April after the expiry of any guarantee provided by the local authority.
- 12.6. The legal rights of Onward's tenants are set out in their tenancy agreement and this policy does not create any additional legal rights.

### 13. Responsibility and monitoring

- 13.1. It is the responsibility of the Adaptations Team Leader to ensure this policy is complied with on a day-to-day basis
- 13.2. It is the responsibility of the Safer Neighbourhoods Manager to review any appeals that are submitted to the complaints team to ensure the policy has been complied with
- 13.3. We survey all tenants who have accessed the service and measure our performance against our service standards on a quarterly basis.
- 13.4. An annual report highlighting service performance is submitted to Onward's Senior Leadership Team.

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| Linked documents: | Complaints Resolution Policy<br>Specialist Equipment Management Policy<br>Lift Safety Policy |
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| Date implemented: | 6 August 2024  |
| Policy Lead:      | Gareth Ellis, Safer Neighbourhoods Manager, Operations |
| Approved by:      | Executive Team   |
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