

Dolphin Square Charitable Foundation & Dolphin Living Limited

Aids and Adaptions Policy

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1. Introduction

Dolphin Living recognise the diverse needs of our residents and their family members who have disabilities. We will work closely with Local Authority Partners, Health Professionals and other relevant agencies to make sure there is a coordinated approach towards the aids and adaptation of a resident home. The purpose of an adaptation is to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence, and dignity through modifying the physical environment in terms of the building structure.

A suitable, well adapted home can be the defining factor in enabling a disabled person to live well and independently. Adaptations can have an immediate, practical, and positive effect on daily life for an individual at home.

Dolphin Living will take all reasonable measures to provide or grant consent for aids and adaptations, making best use of its existing adapted properties and will work in close partnership with external agencies.

This policy sets out to clearly define statutory responsibility and legal compliance in relations to aids and adaptations and Dolphin Living's approach to requests for minor and major adaptations. The policy applies to residents living with tenancies made with Dolphin Square Charitable Foundation, Dolphin Housing Limited and Hoxton Regeneration Limited. It does not apply to leaseholders or commercial properties.

2. Policy objectives

1. To ensure that the needs of residents with requirements associated to a disability are met in a fair and equitable manner, subject to the provision of available funding.
2. To maximise all local authority grants and other available resources for adaptations, always having regard to value for money.
3. To ensure there are clear channels of communication and established joint working practices with our partners from the Local Authorities in the areas in which we operate.
4. To comply with legal and statutory requirements in relation to the provision of disabled adaptations.

3. Legal obligations and Good Practice

Dolphin Living have no statutory duty to provide Aids and Adaptations for residents; however, we will meet legal requirements and sector good practices. Refer to Appendix 2 for a list of relevant legal obligations.

4. Funding Aids and Adaptations

Residents' may also choose to fund their own adaptations or may obtain funding or adaptations from charitable sources. In such instances, Dolphin Living will request an Occupational Therapist assessment is carried out (if one has not already been completed) before deciding whether to give permission.

Dolphin will work with Local Authorities and other Agencies to maximise funding for major adaptations from external statutory sources. Additional contribution towards aids and adaptations will be considered if there is a shortfall in funds available from the Local Authority.

Dolphin, in some circumstances, will undertake adaptations to communal areas.

Refer to Appendix 2 for what Dolphin class as minor and major adaptations, and what Dolphin will and will not fund.

5. Standards and Approvals

Dolphin Living will consider our resident's housing options prior to any aids or adaptations being agreed. Dolphin predominantly provide intermediate market rented homes on 3-year tenancy agreements. Any application to carry out adaptation works will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and subject to the tenancy type. We will support a resident or applicant to find more appropriate accommodation if the home is not suitable for adaption. Where the resident is living in an affordable or social home, we will work with the Local Authority agencies to assess the suitability of the home before granting permission.

Requests for adaptations should be made to our Managing Agent- Touchstone, who will coordinate the approval process with Dolphin.

In some cases, residents may wish to fund the adaptations themselves. These will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Residents may be asked to return the property to the original state when they terminate their tenancy. If the request is granted, the resident will be responsible for all costs incurred in accordance with installation. This includes all associated remedial and defect works to the whole property as well as all ongoing servicing, repair and replacement costs. Dolphin Living reserves the right to inspect works at any time and identify any remedial works, which will become the full responsibility of the resident at the address.

No works can proceed until all relevant information and property inspections have been provided to a satisfactory standard i.e. design drawing, specifications, surveys, planning application and building regulation approvals, property and (if applicable) asbestos surveys, pre start meeting etc. and full written approval has been provided to the resident by the Dolphin Living.

Any additional warranty checks or surveyor reports will be at the cost of the relevant party. Dolphin Living reserves the right to reject requests to adapt properties.

6. Servicing, repair, renewal, removal and insurance of aids and adaptations

Servicing

Some adaptations, for example stair lifts, will require ongoing maintenance servicing. Before permission is given to install an adaptation with an on-going servicing requirement, written confirmation must be provided by the resident that they understand the requirement and agree to fund the servicing costs themselves.

Repairs and replacement

Dolphin does not accept responsibility for any repair, renewal or insurance of any equipment installed in our homes as a provided by the Local Authority agency. This responsibility remains with the resident for the duration of their tenancy.

Removal or Re-use at vacation

Where a void property already has an adaptation in-situ a full assessment will be undertaken to identify the age and condition of the adaptation, and whether it would be suitable for the adaptation to remain.

Where it is identified that:

- the adaptation is in good condition, the property type will be assessed for long-term suitability and, where appropriate, adaptations will be kept in-situ to ensure best use of the property.
- there is no need for the adaptation which has been installed, consideration will be given to removing the adaptation and restoring the property to the current lettable standard for the property type.
- the adaptation is not viable for future lettings it will be removed as part of the voids process. Consideration will be given to the suitability of resitting the adaptation equipment (e.g. stairlift, clos-o-mat) and/or storing for future use. This will be decided prior to removal.

In the event of death of the resident or household member whom the adaptation was intended for, the responsibility of the adaptations will be with members of the family or household to remove and reinstate the property to its original state.

If the resident of the property where the adaptations are installed moves out, the responsibility of removing the adaptations will be with the Local Authority.

If the adaptation is for a family member who no longer need the adaptations, the responsibility of removal is with the Local Authority in the first instance.

7. Resident Obligations

- It is the responsibility of the resident to ensure that any adaptations are maintained to a reasonable standard and are not misused or abused.

- The resident must allow access for any servicing or repairs if there are annual maintenance and inspection requirements.
- Any repairs costs, because of misuse, will be charged to the resident.
- All adaptations are the property of the funding agent and must not be removed or resold

8. Monitoring and Review

Dolphin will monitor, analyse and report on aids and adaptations to ensure the process is delivered effectively and that timescales are achieved.

We will use the learning from formal complaints and customer feedback as part of a programme of service improvement reviews.

Dolphin will carry out a review of an adapted property every 3 years or sooner if there are regulatory or legislative changes.

Appendix 1 Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions will apply:

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) 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.

Using the social model of disability, an adaptation is a modification to disabling environments 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.

Aids and adaptations

Adaptations are split into the following categories and the 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 all adaptations can impact significantly on an individual's quality of life. Many of these alterations are minor and include handrails in the bathroom or ramps to their front doors. In a few cases the works are significantly more extensive and expensive and may involve the installation of lifts, wet rooms and ground floor property extensions.

Minor adaptations non DFG funded

Minor adaptations are defined as non-structural alterations or additions to the property - minor adaptations up to £1000 will be funded by the Local Authority on receipt of a request from a resident or Occupational Therapist. The value of works should include the cost of buying and fitting the adaptation.

Local Authority Funded Adaptations (DFG)

Major adaptations are defined as involving structural alteration and would typically cost more than £1,000.

Appendix 2 Legal obligations

The Equality Act 2010

The Housing, Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

The Care Act 2014

The NHS & Community Care Act 1990

The statutory responsibility for the funding of adaptations is the duty of the Local Authority. Dolphin Living's residents are entitled to apply for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) through the Local Authority under the terms of.

There is no legal requirement under the Equality Act for Dolphin Living to make any changes which would consist of or include the removal or alteration of a physical feature of the property which includes:

- Any feature arising from the design or construction of a building
- Any feature of any approach to, exit from or access to a building
- Any other physical element or quality therefore, there is no requirement on Dolphin Living to make changes which affect the structure or would substantially and permanently alter a property.

Appendix 3 Funding

Funding	Minor Adaptations	Major Adaptions
Dolphin Living will fund minor adaptation to a maximum of £500.* Examples may include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs or notices • Lever/ mixer taps with TMVs (Thermostatic Mixer Valve) • Door handles • Grab-rails/ hand rails • Plinth for WC • Silent bells/ doorbells • Door/ wall protectors • Visual smoke alarms • communal area accessible – e.g. ramp or handrails on both sides of the staircase. 	
If an adaptation is more than £500, residents who fit the criteria can apply for the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portable Equipment • Ramps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stair lifts • Ceiling tracks for hoists • Door entry systems • Door widening • Level access showers/ wet rooms.
*all request for adaptions will need an accompanying occupational therapist (OT) report.		