



TAI CANOLBARTH CYMRU MID-WALES HOUSING

Yn barod **amdani** **Equal** to the challenge

Adaptations Policy

Strategic Aim:	To contribute towards supporting people with disabilities to live independently.
Reference No:	Adaptations Policy
Date of Issue:	March 2017
Review Date	March 2010
Next Review Date:	March 2020
Departments Affected:	All Departments
Approved By/Date:	Board of Management March 2017
Lead Officer:	Grants & Adaptations Officer
Statutory Compliance:	The Equality Act 2010 makes it the duty of a Landlord or the manager of a property to make reasonable adjustments to a property if a resident is disadvantaged because of a disability.

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ADAPTATIONS POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Adaptations make properties more accessible and usable for people with a medical condition or disability and thereby enable them to maximise their independence in their own home.

We recognise that it is often the environment that creates the barrier rather than any disability that a resident may have. Through the delivery of **minor** and **major** adaptations, we can help alleviate some of these barriers to increase independence, provide privacy and dignity, reduce extended stays in hospital and improve the quality of lives.

As a Registered Social Landlord, Mid-Wales Housing Association (MWHHA) is eligible to claim Physical Adaptation Grant (PAG) from the Welsh Government (WG) for qualifying **major** adaptations.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

MWHHA seeks to demonstrate a commitment to providing an equitable adaptations service, both independently and in partnership with Care & Repair in Powys, local authorities and the Welsh Government (WG).

All residents and applicants can request a major adaptation providing such a request is supported by an Occupational Therapist's recommendation. Provision of adaptations will be based on whether the adaptations "are necessary and appropriate and reasonable and practical", as set out in the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. Each application will be assessed on its own merit to ensure adaptations enhance rather than devalue our stock.

MWHHA will:

- ✓ Aim to provide a high quality aids and adaptations service through the efficient management of resources and funding.
- ✓ Endeavour to match applicants or residents with properties that have been adapted.
- ✓ Deliver a customer focused adaptations service, completing the work efficiently and competently.
- ✓ Consult with the resident to ensure their involvement and preferences are taken into account throughout the adaptation process.
- ✓ Liaise with Occupational Therapists (OTs) and Care & Repair in Powys to support residents with their application, ensuring progress and outcomes are clearly and appropriately communicated.

- ✓ Monitor the performance of approved contractors to ensure all work is completed in accordance with the agreed specifications, timescales and remain within budget.
- ✓ Deliver value for money by ensuring Welsh Government's Physical Adaptation Grant (PAG) is managed in a cost effective manner.
- ✓ Ensure our new build properties comply with Building Regulations and DQR (Development Quality Requirements) thereby incorporate flexibility for future adaptation.
- ✓ Maintain a consistent approach to carrying out minor and major adaptations to all of our properties.
- ✓ Actively promote the aids and adaptations service to tenants.
- ✓ Ensure MWAHA complies with its legal and statutory requirements.

Key Considerations:

- ✓ **Rehousing Residents** – Where it is identified that an adaptation is not practical or feasible, the Association reserves the right to refuse approval for the adaptation requested. In these circumstances, the Association will consider re-housing tenants if an appropriate property becomes available.
- ✓ **New Build** – Major adaptations will be discouraged after handover of new build properties and only considered if there have been unforeseen and exceptional circumstances, for example, a sudden or serious medical deterioration of the tenant(s).
- ✓ **Request for Level Access Showers in a Three-bedroom Property** – WHQS compliance states three-bedroom properties require a bath to achieve 'Pass'. When a request for a level access shower is received and removal of the bath is necessary, the following options should be given initial consideration:
 - Is there an alternative space within the property to fit a shower, such as alongside the downstairs WC?
 - Would the resident consider moving to an alternative property?
 - If there is no alternative and the bath has to be removed, the property needs to be classed as WHQS 'acceptable fail' under the physical constraint category as defined in our WHQS Compliancy Policy.

3. Definitions

An **adaptation** is a modification to a disabling environment or structure 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.

In **The Equality Act 2010**, a person has a disability if:

- They have a physical or mental impairment;
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day to day activities.

For the purpose of the Act, these words have the following meanings:

- ‘Substantial’ means more than minor or trivial;
- ‘Long-term’ means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions);
- ‘Normal day to day activities’ include everyday functions such as eating, washing, walking and going shopping.

Adaptations are split into two categories – **Minor and Major**.

These 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.

Minor Adaptations

- Minor adaptations are typically smaller items costing £500 or less.
- Minor adaptations are funded by the Association’s own minor adaptations budget - spend against budget will be monitored and the budget reviewed annually.

Major Adaptations

- Major adaptations are funded through the Welsh Government’s (WG) **Physical Adaptations Grant (PAG)** via the Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme.
- The **WG Fast Track system** simplifies the funding application process, reducing time and resulting in a more efficient service.
- Works which come within fast track limits can proceed without prior approval and grant funding is claimed retrospectively.
- The fast track procedure can only be used for adaptation categories listed in the table below.

Current Limits

	Fast Track Limit (Cost of work + 15% On Costs)
Level Access Shower	£6,500
Stair lift	£3,500
Access Aids – includes ramps, door widening, entry systems and ceiling track hoists	£3,500

- Proposed adaptations that do not fall under one of these descriptions or where cost of works exceed the fast track limit can progress via the standard approval route using a Scheme 1A form.

- If works are approved, the Association carries out the adaptation and claims the approved grant after completion of works.

4. Equality and Diversity

We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently. We will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities.

5. Performance Monitoring & Review

The service will be subject to performance monitoring to assist in the development and review of the service:

- Technical Officers and OTs will carry out a post inspection on major adaptations to ensure that the works meet the quality standard expected and are to the satisfaction of the tenant, OTs and the Association.
- Customer satisfaction surveys will be sent to all residents who have had adaptation works completed and replies recorded.
- All adapted properties will be accurately recorded on IBS housing database to inform future lettings and servicing of associated equipment.
- The number of minor and major adaptations undertaken is recorded each financial year and reported to Board.
- MWAHA will review this policy every two years, unless changes in legislation or regulation require an earlier review.
- Should a resident be unhappy about a decision or the service they receive, the Association's Complaint Procedure should be followed.

A detailed Adaptations Procedure supports this policy to ensure a consistent implementation and approach is taken.

Cross References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Equality Scheme. • Asset Management Strategy. • Allocations and Void Management Policy. • 2016 WHQS Compliance Policy. 	
Strategic Risk Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Association will fail to assist those in greatest need through failing to ensure services are available and equitable • That the Association will incur financial loss or other commercial disadvantage through failure to respond to the needs of residents and applicants • That the Association's reputation will be diminished if it is perceived of as being "unfair" or "inequitable" 	
Equality Impact Audit	<i>How does/will this policy ensure needs are met fairly particularly with regard to race, gender, disability?</i>	It sets out the policy framework for the Association to ensure it treats residents and applicants fairly.
	<i>Is it felt this Policy might affect different groups adversely. If so what is the justification for this, and is it legally permissible?</i>	No groups or individuals are expected to be affected adversely. Applicants and residents with a disability will have improved access to affordable housing.
	<i>Have any representative groups in the locality been asked for their opinion and if so what was the outcome?</i>	Senior Occupational Therapists in Powys consulted and their feedback has helped inform the proposed Policy.
Tenant Engagement	<i>How does/will this Policy ensure the needs of tenants are met?</i>	By responding positively to request for adaptations.
	<i>How is it felt this Policy will impact on the rights and obligations of tenants?</i>	The policy is designed to continue to provide an equitable service even if funding is cut back.
	<i>Have tenants been consulted and were the outcomes of that consultation taken into account when considering the introduction to this Policy?</i>	Draft Policy reviewed by TaRF in January 2017 and minor amendments suggested now incorporated.