



# Aids and Adaptations Policy

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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1. The Aids and Adaptations policy outlines Livin's principles and approach to adapting properties to meet the needs of tenants whose current home is no longer suitable as a result of a disability or other life limiting condition affecting them or another permanent household member.

1.2 The service is delivered as part of the Livin Well offer and provides a comprehensive and holistic service, delivering personalised support offers and improvements to enable tenants and future tenants to remain living independently in their homes.

1.3 Livin's Plan A 2022-25 strategy sets out our commitment to supporting sustainable tenancies and enabling sustainable places. Plan A 2022-25 targets aids and adaptations to support independent, sustainable living, prioritised in homes that best meet tenant needs.

1.4 Livin understands that if a tenant is not provided with appropriate support, there is a risk that the tenancy may fail as the property becomes unsuitable for their household needs.

1.5 This Policy relates to all social rented properties owned by Livin across all local authority areas in which it operates.

## 2.0. Policy Statement

2.1 Livin is committed to facilitating the provision of personalised aids and adaptations to properties where this will directly relate to improving the quality of life of tenants and their carers.

2.2 Livin will ensure that any aids and adaptations create accessible, sustainable properties.

2.3 Livin will constantly improve and develop the service using innovative products and technology including digital adaptations.

2.4 Livin is committed to working in partnership with Local Authorities and relevant organisations in areas within which Livin has properties.

2.5 Livin aims to take a holistic and person-centred approach, providing personalised solutions to assist tenants to live independently.

## 3.0 Legislative Framework

3.1 As a responsible social landlord, Livin provides aids and adaptations to support tenants to sustain their tenancies and remain independent in their homes where it is reasonable and practicable to do so.

3.2 Livin works closely with Local Authorities to meet the adaptation needs of tenants. Local Authorities are required to comply with a range of legislation surrounding aids and adaptations including:

- The Care Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Disabled Facilities Grant (England) Order 2008
- Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 SI2002/1860
- The NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- The Children Act 2004
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Person Act 1970

### 4.0 Minor adaptations

4.1 Minor adaptations are identified as less than £1,000 in value and specified as smaller works, including items such as handrails, lever taps and grab rails.

4.2 The timely provision of minor adaptations can often sustain the independence of a tenant and it is an important preventative service.

### 5.0 Major Adaptations

5.1 Major adaptations are generally structural changes to the property which exceed £1,000 in value and include such things as level access showers, wet rooms, stair lifts and door access ramps.

5.2 Prior to considering a major adaptation, Livin will work with the tenant to consider whether this is the most appropriate, equitable and cost effective way to sustain their independent living and assess other support needs.

5.3 Livin will only approve major adaptations to family homes where that supports the sustainability of a tenancy for which the property was intended and most suited e.g. the needs of a child or parent / carer for a dependent child. Where older tenants under occupying family accommodation request a major adaptation, Livin will provide support and advice to enable that tenant, where it is desirable, to access appropriate accommodation (e.g. bungalow / ground floor flat). Livin will utilise direct lets to prioritise and support such tenants moving out of family homes and into more sustainable accommodation.

### 6.0. Eligibility

6.1 To be eligible for an adaptation the individual must be a permanent member of the household. Lodgers will not be considered for an adaptation.

6.2 Livin will assess and undertake aids and adaptations work for tenants and those on the Transfer and Housing Waiting Lists to optimise the ability of the household to sustain their tenancy.

6.3 Before undertaking any work it will be assessed against the criteria recommended by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration

Act 1996: Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant. To ensure the service is equitable the same criteria will be adopted as for the Disabled Facilities Grant to ensure the adaptation being installed is necessary and appropriate.

### 7.0. Refusals

7.1 All recommendations including those from the Local Authority will be assessed by Livin to ensure the work is reasonable and practical. In some cases, Livin may refuse to carry out works if:

- The structure/build or design of the property cannot accommodate the adaptations required.
- There is a suitable alternative property, which could be offered.
- The tenant has moved from a property already suitably adapted to meet their needs
- The adaptation may not meet the future long-term needs of the tenant.
- The property is likely to be subject to an asset solutions appraisal or regeneration

7.2 When an adaptation is not possible the support needs and geographical preferences of the tenant will be considered and Livin will endeavour to support the applicant to access alternative accommodation that meets their needs.

7.3 In exceptional circumstances where a property is deemed to be significantly adapted, in short supply and meets the needs of an applicant requiring the adaptation, Livin may consider a direct allocation in accordance with allocations policy.

7.4 Any refusal to undertake an adaptation will be discussed in full with the tenant and other options explored.

### 8.0 Prioritisation

8.1 Referrals for minor adaptations to facilitate a hospital discharge for tenants will be given priority and Livin will aim to complete these works within 48 hours.

8.2 Ordinary minor adaptations will have a target for completion ranging between 5 and 25 days depending on the adaptation required.

8.3 Major adaptations undertaken by Livin will have a maximum target of 90 days, which includes the time required for the relevant surveys to be carried out and the adaptation, which is often bespoke to the tenant, to be installed.

8.4 A referral will be reclassified as 'urgent' if the absence of the recommended adaptation presents an immediate and significant health and safety risk to the recipient such as:

- A confirmed diagnosis of a terminal condition or
- A confirmed diagnosis of a progressive, degenerative neurological and/or life limiting condition.

8.5 Subject to the appropriate consent/approvals, where classified as urgent, a minor repair will be completed within 5 days and a major repair will be completed within 30 days.

## 9.0 Disabled Facilities Grant (Adaptations in excess of £1000)

9.1 Requests for major adaptation works exceeding £1,000 will be referred to the Local Authority for assessment. Any work will be considered under their Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) schemes. The Local Authority has discretion to cover up to 100% of the cost of any adaptations up to £30,000 in value. Where appropriate Livin will pay a tenant's contribution to ensure they are not disadvantaged.

## 10.0 Home Investment Programme

10.1 Properties due to be modernised as part of the Home Investment Programme (HIP) provide an opportunity for aids and installation to limit the disturbance to tenants.

Tenants will undertake a needs assessment and where an adaptation is required it will be completed as part of the HIP and any additional costs associated will be charged to the aids and adaptations budget.

## 11.0 Exclusions

11.1 The following are not eligible as part of the service:

- Play safe areas inside the property
- Garden/landscaping works

11.2 Livin will consider requests for additional adaptations, which may fall outside the remit of statutory services (usually defined by DFG criteria) on a case by case basis. These include, and are not limited to:

- Scooters
- Vehicular access, hard standings and driveways
- Play safe areas outside the property
- Access to the garden
- Additional / improved fencing

11.3 Where it is practicable to do so we will enable access for scooters where possible to the main entrance of a property including widening paths and gates to a wheelchair accessible standard in homes that best meet the needs of the individual tenant / household member. We will provide an outside charging point and a D ring for security of the scooter.

11.4 Driveway. To enable wheelchair accessibility

- The driver must be unable to walk, wheel themselves or be wheeled to and from the nearest parking space
- It is unsafe to transfer in and out of the vehicle when it is parked on the roadside

### 11.5 Garden access including play safe

- Where possible one access would be provided that allowed access to both the home and the garden
- Immediate access to the garden only will be provided
- A patio area can be extended to allow appropriate wheelchair movement
- A safe area can be provided outside with appropriate fencing to maintain the safety of a child in the garden

### 11.6 Fencing. To improve the safety and wellbeing of occupants

- To ensure that an occupant is able to remain safely within the property boundary and reduce the 'flight' risk
- Evidenced need for additional fence to reduce the impact on mental health

11.7 An over bath shower will be provided following an occupational therapy assessment either from the DCC OT service or the Livin OT. This will be provided when bathing equipment is deemed unsuitable and it is unnecessary or inappropriate to remove the bath to enable independent bathing.

11.8 Tenants can seek permission to undertake any adaptations themselves through the arrangements within the Tenant Led Alterations Policy. However, Livin reserves the right to recharge the tenant for removing and making good any adaptations left in the property on termination of the tenancy.

## 12.0 Existing Adaptations

12.1 Livin will re-use all aids and adaptations equipment where possible.

12.2 Livin will review existing adaptations when a property becomes empty. This will allow an assessment of whether to keep, remove or replace the adaptation depending on its suitability to the property and future tenants.

12.3 Stairlifts will be removed when a property becomes void unless there are other major adaptations in the property and a person/family has been identified that they are suitable for.

## 13.0 Raising Awareness of the Service

13.1 Livin will proactively raise awareness of the service through the website, social media and frontline teams.

13.2 Livin tenants can request adaptations through the contact centre where they will be given further advice on how to apply for an adaptation that meets their needs.

### 14.0. Review of Decisions

14.1 Tenants who are not satisfied with the aids and adaptations service should request a case review by the Tenancy Support Manager who will establish if the policy has been followed. If a decision complies with this Policy then no further action will be taken.

However, if the decision does not comply with this Policy the Tenancy Support Manager will review the decision and reassess it based on the evidence gathered. If the outcome of this review is not satisfactory to the tenant then they can then follow Livin's formal complaints procedure.

14.2 For decisions made by a Local Authority regarding major adaptations, the tenant will be signposted to the relevant department within that LA. Livin will not accept complaints where we are not the decision maker.

### 15.0 Customer Voice

15.1 The development of this Policy has been shaped by engagement and consultation with tenants to ensure it meets their needs and their views are heard and acted upon. A revised Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken.

### 16.0 Performance and Review

16.1 Livin will assess the following as part of the Performance Management Framework: -

- Tenants' satisfaction with the aids and adaptations works
- Tenants' satisfaction with the aids and adaptation service delivery
- Percentage of minor adaptations carried out within target time
- Percentage of major adaptations carried out within target time

16.2 This policy will be reviewed every three years or due to a change in legislation or external factors.

End of Policy