



## Aids and Adaptations Policy

### 1. Introduction

This policy provides a framework within which Citizen will implement, operate and monitor the provision of aids & adaptations to its properties.

For the purpose of this policy an aid or adaptation is the provision of fixed equipment and/or modification to the property or associated land where there has been an identified need to enable customers and their household where appropriate to live safely and independently in their home.

While Citizen has no legal obligation to provide aids and adaptations, we will work in partnership with relevant organisations to provide a service that meets customer's needs. This policy seeks to enable customers to live safely in their home and retain their independence through the provision of aids and adaptations to the home

We will aim to make efficient use of resources available to fund adaptations ensuring value for money, best practice and compliance with regulatory obligations as directed by the Regulator for Social Housing.

If for any reason we are unable to carry out adaptations, we will try our best to accommodate and will consider other options such as relocation to another property better suited for you.

The policy takes into consideration legislation such as the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 requires landlords to provide temporary adaptations for disabled people where they are required. However, there is no legal requirement for Citizen to make any changes that would consist of or include the removal or alteration of a physical feature of the property. Therefore, for adaptations that require removing or altering the physical features of a property, reasonable adjustments will be considered but these may not always be practical or appropriate. Where a home no longer meets the needs of the customer, a move to more appropriate accommodation should be considered.

### 2. Scope

Citizen will only fund disabled aids and adaptations for residents living in our rented homes. Adaptations will not be carried out in any property, which:

- Has a Right to Buy application with a live status

#### POLICY

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Lead Officer: Peter Gill

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- Has a Right to Acquire Application with a live status
- Is a short life leased property

Or where the tenure is Leasehold, Shared Ownership or Outright Sale. These tenures may qualify for help via a local authority Disabled Facilities Grant. We are not responsible for any adaptation works for equipment not fixed to the property.

Budgets will be agreed to carry out adaptations to properties managed for others in line with their usual funding arrangements.

We will only carry out adaptation to a property if it benefits a permanent resident in the household.

### **3. Policy Detail**

#### **3.1 Minor Adaptations**

Works that typically cost less than £1000 and include items such as grab rails, lever taps, and additional handrail to stairs will be provided to customers by Citizen if they are requested (subject to available budget).

Where we are unsure of the cost of a required adaptation, we may organise for a contractor to survey and quote the work to determine whether it exceeds the limit.

All requests for minor adaptations will be considered on an individual basis and prioritised according to customer's needs.

Where the budget for a financial year has been expended the customers application will be recorded on a waiting list, prioritised according to need.

#### **3.2 Major Adaptation**

Works that typically cost more than £1000 and include items such as level access showers, alterations to doorways and provision of ramps are subject to a referral from an Occupational Therapist who has assessed the level of need.

Major adaptations are funded through a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) available from the local authority which has a set criteria to follow. Permission will also be required from Citizen to carry out any alterations to the property.

Where a DFG has been approved, the Occupational Therapist will need to make a referral to Citizen on the customers behalf with the recommendations needed for the adaptation. All

major adaptation requests are subject to Local authority prioritisation and approval as well as being subject to their available budgets.

Funding from Local Authorities for a DFG may be limited and in some areas a waiting list may be in place.

If for any reason we are unable to carry out adaptations, we will try our best to accommodate and will consider other options such as relocation to another property better suited for you.

### **3.3 Restrictions**

DFGs are provided under the terms of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 - Any adaptation work recommended must be both **necessary** and **appropriate** and also **reasonable** and **practicable**.

Citizen must be satisfied that it is reasonable and practical to carry out the relevant works having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling or building. There may be times when it is simply not reasonable or practical to adapt a property, based on technical issues related to property design or layout.

In which cases, we reserve the right to refuse applications to carry out adaptations to a property. This may be due to the impact on other residents of the property by limiting existing facilities, planning permission constraints which could prevent the works and difficulties adapting properties with certain characteristics, for example, narrow doorways, halls or stairs.

We also have the right to reserve to decline requests for adaptations to a property where customers have accepted to move into a property with awareness that it did not meet their needs at the time.

We will advise residents for whom we undertake adaptations that we may refuse to carry out adaptations to successive dwellings unless there is an overriding need to move, for example overcrowding.

In the case that you should choose to give up a home which had been adapted to meet your needs, we will not provide support for, or adapt a property that you have chosen to move to without reasonable justification.

In the event of your death, if your successor does not require the adaptations we may ask them to move to alternative accommodation so that the adapted property can be used with someone else who requires it.

You may be required to contribute towards the cost of the adaptation if the costs of the adaptation exceed the DFG threshold.

### **3.4 Rent and Service Charge Implications**

The rent of a property may be reviewed following an adaptation, if the works completed have resulted in an additional bedroom or removal of a bedroom at the property.

A service charge may be introduced where adaptations require a maintenance contract to be taken out to maintain/service equipment installed. Customers should be made aware of this and their written consent to meet the service charge is obtained prior to installation. Any changes to the rent due need to be agreed and changed legally through a notice of variation before work can begin.

Citizen will also replace such equipment at the end of its useful life subject to confirmation of a continuing requirement and the availability of further funding; for example if the original adaptation was paid for by a DFG the resident will normally be required to seek a further DFG.

## **4. Roles, responsibility and Governance**

It is the responsibility of the Board to seek assurance that this Policy is successfully implemented. The Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this Policy and that all staff understand the importance of this Policy, the related procedures and that they comply with them.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that their team have undertaken the appropriate Policy eLearning and training,

Any changes to this Policy must be made in line with the requirements set out in Citizens Standing Orders and our Policy framework.

## 5. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, unless legislation, service delivery or sector developments require otherwise ensuring the policy continues to meet its objectives and take account of good practice developments.

Legal advice will be taken to ensure compliance with legal, regulatory and contractual responsibilities.

Where appropriate service delivery reports in respect of this policy as incorporated into our quarterly reporting suite.

## 6. Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been subject to an Equality Analysis. Staff working across Citizen have considered the impact of this policy on different groups and communities that we work with. In framing this policy, our staff are committed to not discriminate adversely against any group and will respect the diversity of the communities we are working within.

The EIA and any actions identified as needing to be implemented are in Appendix 1

## 7. VERSION CONTROL

| VERSION | DATE      | AMENDMENTS                             | APPROVED AT/BY                        | REVIEW                   |
|---------|-----------|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| V 1.0   | Sept 2019 | Policy updated to Citizen brand format | n/a                                   |                          |
| V 2.0   | June 2021 | Policy Review                          | ELT                                   | 2024                     |
| V3.0    | Dec 2022  | Light touch review                     | Director of Housing, Care and Support | Full review due Feb 2024 |