

## **AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY**

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### **1 Statement of Intent**

- 1.1 Maidenhead & District Housing Association will seek to ensure that wherever possible, and subject to available resources, disabled tenants can have necessary and appropriate adaptations carried out to their homes, thereby enhancing their quality of life and maximising their independence.

### **2 Aims**

- 2.1 The Association aims to assist residents in need of aids and adaptations by working in partnership with local authorities to ensure that necessary and appropriate aids and adaptations for individuals are implemented.

### **3 Requests**

- 3.1 If tenants request adaptations to their homes, either for their own benefit or that of another permanent member of the household, they must first approach the social services department at the relevant local authority, so that a professional assessment of needs can be carried out. Aids and adaptations will only be considered subject to a receipt of a referral from an occupational therapist.
- 3.2 Whilst permission for alterations and adaptations to homes is necessary from the Association (as detailed in the Tenancy Agreement and Tenants Handbook), such permission will not be withheld unreasonably. When it is not possible to satisfactorily adapt the tenant's present home because of the layout, location, or potential impact on neighbouring properties, the Association will attempt to transfer (in accordance with the Lettings Policy) the tenant to somewhere more appropriate.

### **4 Cost**

- 4.1 Where works costing in excess of £500 are necessary, the Association will require grant funding from local authorities or other agencies (which if awarded, will normally cover the entire cost of the proposed works). Grant applications have to be made by the tenant, guardian or carer to the appropriate agency. Applications must be supported by an occupational therapist to confirm that the proposed works are necessary, appropriate,

## **MAIDENHEAD and DISTRICT HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

reasonable and practicable. Even if these points are satisfied, the local authority or other agencies will firstly examine any possibility of transferring the household to a more suitable property (which may not necessarily be with the Association). If this is not possible within a reasonable timescale, then grant will be provided for in respect of the works set out below:

- Improving heating systems
- Adapting heating or lighting controls
- Improving ease of access to get into and out of the home
- Improving ease of access to the living room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom

4.2 The local authority will carry out a means-test to assess the tenant's eligibility for grant funding, and may require the tenant to make a contribution towards the costs of any works. If the tenant is required to make a contribution, the Association will normally, subject to available resources, fund the tenant's contribution up to a maximum of £500.

4.3 Where the cost of the works is less than £500 grant funding is not available but the Association will normally, subject to available resources, fund them. However, in either case, no works will be funded by the Association until any rent arrears have been cleared, or a satisfactory repayment arrangement has been made and adhered to (the arrangement must be adhered to for a period of time to be determined by the Rent Control Manager – this qualifying period will be dependent on previous repayment history). The Association will not withhold consent for aids and adaptations where a tenant is in rent arrears.

## **5 Doing the work**

5.1 Tenants will be offered a surveying service for the preparation of specifications, drawings, obtaining of quotes and supervision of the works.

5.2 Where this service is taken up, the Association will carry out the works on behalf of the tenant, and will require direct payment of the grant. The Association will then pay for and claim back their costs from both grant provider, and tenant (if applicable) upon successful completion of the works.

5.3 If tenants wish to employ their own builders to undertake the works, this will be considered providing the Association receives a full specification of the proposals, which are agreeable to it and the tenant gains all relevant statutory consents. These consents and the Association's permission must be obtained in advance of the works being commenced. The Association may then inspect the standard of the builder's work both in progress and upon completion, to satisfy itself that the terms of its consent have been met.

## **6 Rent**

## **MAIDENHEAD and DISTRICT HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

- 6.1 By their nature, these works are deemed as tenant improvements, and even if they result in the enlargement of the property, will not affect the rent charged during that tenancy.
- 6.2 Should the tenant surrender their tenancy, they will only be reimbursed for any increase in the properties subsequent rental value by virtue of any aids and adaptations they have funded (in line with the Association's '*Recompense for Tenants' Own Improvements Policy*'). No works funded via grants or the Association will be eligible for recompense under the '*Recompense for Tenants' Own Improvements Policy*'.
- 6.3 Upon an adapted property becoming void, the target rent will be re-calculated using the formula set out in the Group's Rent Policy, and will be the basis for charging rent to future tenants in that property.

## **7 Equal Opportunities**

- 7.1 Maidenhead & District Housing Association is committed to a policy of fair and equal treatment for all its members, tenants, employees and applicants, regardless of religion, sexual orientation, age, class, racial origin, sex, disability or marital status as determined in the Equal Opportunities Strategy.

## **8 Review**

- 8.1 The Aids and Adaptations Policy will be reviewed on a 2 yearly basis or in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, good practice or changes in other relevant Housing Solutions Group policy.