BLACK COUNTRY HOUSING GROUP

AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY

1. Purpose

BCH is positive about assisting tenants with disabilities or mobility problems and finding a sustainable solution in their homes. This policy is designed to ensure that BCH effectively meets demand, manages the budget, complies with the Disability Discrimination Act 1998 and achieves the best use of limited resources.

The policy will provide for screening at first contact to separate requests for minor adaptations from more complex requirements in order to prevent unnecessary delays and safeguard tenants' safety and independence at home.

2. Scope

This policy is relevant to all BCH tenants who request aids and adaptations to their homes.

3. Related or Relevant Policy / Procedures or Other Documents

Complaints procedure
Diversity strategy

4. Definitions

Minor works
Minor works will cost less than £1,000 to complete and will typically be much less. They are often needed quickly and include items such as grab rails, stair handrails, door access ramps, lever taps etc. They will be funded by BCH from internal resources and will be specified using a common-sense approach in discussion with the tenant.

Major works
Major works will cost more than £1,000 and include items such as level access showers, ground floor WCs etc. They will require professional assessment from Occupational Therapists and are unlikely to be provided quickly because of their complexity and scale. The funding source will be via an application by the tenant to their local Council for a Disabled Facilities Grant.

5. Responsibilities

Overseeing the implementation will be the Chief Executive/Directors.
Implementation will be by Operational Managers and designated staff.
Reviewing and updating this procedure is the responsibility of the Head of Housing and the Property Services Manager.

6. Requirements of the Policy / Procedure

A tenant may self refer, may be identified as having difficulties by a housing or maintenance officer or may be referred by an external source such as GPs, health visitors, charities etc.

At this first point of contact, an initial assessment of need will be made to identify if the request is for minor or major works. A visit may need to be undertaken by the housing officer to establish what is required if this is unclear. This initial visit or assessment must be completed within 5 working days. The request will be logged by Maintenance as though it were a request for a day to day repair.

Where works are assessed to be of a minor nature and likely to cost less than £1000, the procedure for 'Minor Works' detailed below will be followed. Where works are assessed to be more complex and expensive the procedure for Major Works detailed below will be followed.

Minor Works

Housing or maintenance staff may authorise minor adaptations work such as handrails, grab rails etc. up to £200 on demand. A simple schedule of rates will be available from Maintenance to assist pricing. For example, a grab rail costs about £30 to fit, an additional stair handrail about £100 etc.

Maintenance will order this work from our internal Care & Repair DLO in the same way as any simple day to day repair using a 'Routine' category for completion within 28 days of request. Orders will be coded to allow analysis of spend and response times. Works of a more urgent nature may be prioritised by agreement. Only simple instructions will be needed as the DLO team are very experienced in working with clients requiring adaptations of this nature.

Where work is more complex or specialist in nature, Maintenance will arrange for surveys/ quotations to be provided. Any contractor may be used for this but the DLO team will be preferred for 'normal' works. Normal procurement arrangements will apply.

Work up to £1000 may be approved by Maintenance using delegated powers although upper levels of expenditure will be considered exceptional and will need to be managed within the overall budget.

Major Works

Where works are of a more complex nature and likely to cost in excess of £1000, the tenant will be advised by their Housing Officer that they will need to apply to their local Council for an assessment visit from an Occupational Therapist. Contact numbers/ details will be provided.

The tenant will be made aware that, if the Occupational Therapist decides that major adaptations are required, the tenant must submit an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant to their local Council. Local Councils are required to facilitate such applications but the Housing Officer may use discretion in terms of the support, advocacy or advice that they provide to tenants.

The Occupational Therapist will write to BCH to request permissions for such work and these will be reviewed by the Property Services Manager and approved wherever possible.
There may be occasions where for physical or economic reasons the tenant's home will not provide suitable long-term accommodation and in these cases the Housing Officer should consider if alternative accommodation offers a better solution. This decision should be made as early as possible to prevent unnecessary delays.

General

Each application should be considered on its own merits and with the particular circumstances of the tenant in mind. It is often the case that the end user best understands what they need and is best placed to decide what is appropriate.

Where the major works process is to be followed, this should not prevent the tenant being assisted as far as possible under the minor works procedure whilst an Occupational Therapist assessment is sought.

If applicants are dissatisfied with the decision or service provided, they should raise the matter with their Housing Officer.

If the dissatisfaction continues, they may use BCH complaints procedure.

7. Records

No specific additional records are anticipated as a result of this procedure. By treating referrals as maintenance requests it will be possible to use existing networked computer systems to record progress, completions and expenditure and allow regular reporting. Major adaptations work will be entered onto individual property records and flagged for future lettings use.

DELAING WITH A REQUEST FOR AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

If unsure about which bracket adaptation falls into seek advice from Richard Ditchfield (Care &Repair)

Minor works cost less than £1,000

Needed quickly, **eg grab rails, stair handrails, door access ramps, lever taps, key safe, shower over bath, ramp, deaf/blind door bell etc.**
Funded by BCH using a common-sense approach in discussion with the tenant.. Approval by a NHM using MINOR REQUEST FORM. Expect sensible requests to be approved.

Ask Maintenance to raise an order. Order will go to Care & Repair as 28 day routine repair. Housing Officer updates Aids & Adaptation spreadsheet at \\Bcha001\mainhousshared\Aid&Adaptations with a rough costing. Please diarise a courtesy call to the customer to check works completed.

Major works cost more than £1,000

Require professional assessment from Occupational Therapists (OT)*, Eg. level access showers, ground floor WCs, larger ramps. unlikely to be provided quickly because of their scale & cost. Funded through tenant application to Local Council for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)**. ***

- Customer can ask to be referred by health professional
- LAs will facilitate application for DFG by vulnerable tenant
- OT will write to Property Service Manager, requesting permission to carry out the works to our property. Details will be noted on IBS by Maintenance.
- Housing Officer will ensure the A&A spreadsheet is updated to 'declined'.

Where major works process is in progress Customer should be assisted as far as possible under the minor works procedure whilst OT assessment is sought.

OT will write to BCH to request permissions for such work and these will be reviewed by the Property Services Manager and approved wherever possible.
There may be occasions where for physical or economic reasons the tenant's home will not provide suitable long-term accommodation and in these cases the Housing Officer should consider if alternative accommodation offers a better solution. This decision should be made as early as possible.

Standard Documents

1. Acknowledge initial enquiry (letter)
2. Minor works approve (letter)
2. Minor works 200-1000 (letter & REFERRAL FORM)
2. Minor works 200-1000 decline (letter)
3. Major works decline (letter)

Don't forget a courtesy call to the customer to check all is well and receive a thank you from them too!

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