



Equipment and Adaptations Policy

SER-POL-06

Version 5.0

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Approved by: Chief Executive

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As a community-based housing Trust Southway will aim to provide a flexible, quality adaptation and equipment service that balances the needs of tenants and residents with consideration of the costs and benefits.
- 1.2 This policy outlines the approach Southway Housing Trust (Southway) will take to:
- Providing minor adaptations to existing tenants
 - Providing major adaptations to existing tenants
 - Offering suitable re-housing options to existing Southway tenants
 - Allocating properties with adaptations to re-housing applicants
 - Allocating properties that can be adapted to re-housing applicants
 - Allocating new build homes with adaptations.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 Southway will work in partnership with the Manchester Equipment and Adaptation Partnership (MEAP), MCC Housing Strategy Team and other RP partners through the Housing Access Board in the delivery of a cost effective and efficient adaptation service.
- 2.2 Southway's aim is to balance the need to enable tenants and their household members to remain independent in their existing homes alongside making best use of its homes given high levels of demand, low turnover and limited new supply.
- 2.3 Southway will support tenants whose homes are not suitable to be adapted or where the decision is taken by MEAP to not provide the adaptation, to move to a more suitable property. This may include providing practical support to move.
- 2.4 Southway will work with partners to find new ways to support independent living through technology including but not limited to the use of telecare and telehealth products in addition to or instead of physical adaptations.
- 2.5 Southway aims to be flexible to meet the needs of tenants and applicants requiring adaptations within the scope of this policy.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all tenants who require minor or major adaptations, alterations, or enhancements to their home as a result of illness or disability. The adaptations or alterations may also be required for a household member permanently living at the property.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 A minor adaptation is an adaptation costing less than £1,000. These adaptations are not eligible for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and include for example; handrails, grab rails and lever taps.
- 4.2 A major adaptation is eligible for DFG and may involve a permanent change to the structure of the property. Major adaptations include stair and through floor lifts, access ramps, wet rooms and in exceptional circumstances a ground floor extension.
- 4.3 When adaptation work is carried out in a bathroom, if there is space to fit a bath as well as a walk-in shower then the bath will be provided. This will improve the facilities available for families living in a home with adaptations and improve the future letting of the home.

5. Eligibility for Adaptations

- 5.1 All requests for adaptations at Southway properties will be assessed by MEAP, including for existing tenants who are rightsizing, who may require a like for like adaptation to be fitted in their new home.
- 5.2 Southway will generally consent to the installation of adaptations in tenants' homes based on the needs assessment and recommendations of MEAP.
- 5.3 However, Southway will not normally give consent for major adaptations in tenant's homes in the following circumstances:
- The family or household member who requires the adaptation is not a permanent occupant at the property
 - The property is under-occupied by two or more bedrooms
 - The property is over-crowded under the Allocations Policy
 - A Notice to Quit or Notice of Seeking Possession has been served for a breach of tenancy (other than rent arrears).

- A possession or injunction order has been granted for a breach of tenancy (other than rent arrears);
- There are rent arrears and a repayment agreement has not been made

OR

- There are rent arrears, and a repayment agreement has been made but has not been adhered to for 13 consecutive weeks.
- There is a live Right to Buy or Right to Acquire application.

5.4 The Chief Executive and/or Executive Director of Landlord and Community Services have delegated authority to provide a major adaptation to a tenant or one of their family members by overriding the above.

5.5 The Chief Executive and/ or Executive Director of Landlord and Community Services also have delegated authority to provide a major adaptation if there is no Disabled Facilities Grant available or if the cost of the works is in excess of the maximum 60% grant awarded plus Southway's normal 40% contribution.

6. Funding

6.1 Southway will contribute 40% to the cost of major adaptations. The remainder of the cost will be funding through Disabled Facilities Grant managed by MCC.

6.2 If the cost of the adaptation is above £40,000 (£30k maximum DFG grant and £10k Southway's 40% contribution) Southway may consider funding the balance if no other accommodation is available, or assist in obtaining discretionary assistance from a grant, loan or equity release, as per the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.

6.3 Southway will not contribute to an adaptation when a means test has been undertaken by MEAP and the tenant has been asked to personally contribute to the adaptation.

6.4 Installed adaptations are the responsibility of Southway both to carry out annual servicing (for example stair lifts) and any maintenance or replacement work that is required.

6.5 Minor adaptations are the statutory responsibility of the local authority. The voluntary provision of Southway funding for these is by agreement which is reviewed each financial year as part of the budget setting process.

7. Allocations

7.1 Wherever possible, properties with existing adaptations will be prioritised for households who have priority need for those adaptations on the housing waiting list.

7.2 Southway will work with the Adapted Homes Team, at Manchester Move, to ensure that adapted homes are let to applicants who will benefit from them.

7.3 Existing Southway tenants who need to transfer to a property with an adaptation or to a property that can be adapted to meet their needs, will be required to register, and bid on Manchester Move alongside other applicants.

8. Removal and Recycling

8.1 Major adaptations will only be removed from homes in the following circumstances:

- The adaptation cannot be repaired or is beyond economic repair.
- The property cannot be let with the adaptation in situ, for example a through floor lift.
- A stair lift that is no longer in use by the person assessed as needing it and leaving it in situ would cause difficulties for the other occupants.

8.2 If equipment is no longer needed and can be of help to someone else, it will be recycled where possible, for example, stair lifts.

8.3 Southway will not generally remove a wet room that is in good condition and replace this with a bath at family homes.

Right to Improve

8.4 Tenants have the right to put in their own improvements including adaptations. If they wish to do so they must gain the permission of Southway Housing Trust as the landlord, alongside obtaining all necessary approvals such as Planning and Building Regulations.

9. Statutory and Legislative Framework

9.1 The Equality Act 2010 refers to the duty to make reasonable adjustments depending on, amongst other criteria; how practical the changes are, how much money and resources are available and the cost of making changes.

9.2 The legal principle for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is contained in the Housing, Grants, Construction, and Regeneration Act 1996. The availability of a DFG is dependent on all three of the following criteria being met:

- The works are necessary and appropriate, and
- The works are reasonable and practicable to carry out; and
- The applicant's means-tested contribution (except for children) is less than the approved value of the grant.

10. Right to Buy and Right to Acquire

10.1 For the purposes of Right to Buy and Right to Acquire applications an application can be refused on the basis that it is an adapted property defined in the following way:

The property must have features that are substantially different from those of ordinary dwelling houses and have

- Been designed for people who are physically disabled and
- Is one of a group of dwellings which it is the practice of the landlord to let for occupation by people who are physically disabled and
- Is in close proximity to a social service or special facility provided wholly or partly for the purpose of assisting the occupants.

10.2 If all of the above criteria are met the application will be denied under Part B of the RTB2.

11. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

11.1 This policy is intended to operate within Southway's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, including equal treatment for all protected characteristics.

12. Performance Management

12.1 KPI's to be monitored will be agreed with MEAP annually and reported on a quarterly basis. These will include:

- Customer satisfaction with the adaptation, the service, and the contractor carrying out the work.
- % of major adaptations completed within six months from the date of the assessment of need.
- % of minor adaptations completed within agreed timescales.

13. Policy Implementation

13.1 The Executive Director Landlord and Community Services will have responsibility for ensuring that the policy is implemented.

13.2 The policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

14. Links to other Policies and Strategies

- Customer Care Policy
- Equalities Scheme
- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Void Management Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Allocations Scheme
- Mutual Exchange Policy

POLICY REVIEW HISTORY
<i>To be completed during each review</i>

Previous versions (version number – approved by – approval date – title if different)	
V1 – Board – 03/09/2009 V2 – Board – 06/09/2011 V3 – Board – 05/11/2013 V4 – Chief Executive 12/10/2018 V5 Chief Executive July 2024	
Date of last EIA:	12/10/2018
Review lead by:	Jane Gant
Main points or amendments made and reasons	
V5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General updates to make the policy clearer and removal of reference to a city wide agreement on adaptations which is no longer used. ▪ Follows consultation with P&P Committee 06/02/2024 	
Next review due:	Dependant on policy changes from MCC but no later than 3 years (Q1 2027)
Approval level:	Chief Executive

