



# Aids & Adaptations Policy

<b>Document Control</b>	
Document Title	Aids & Adaptations Policy
Author	Repairs and Voids Manager
Version	1.0
Release Date	June 2024
Next Review Date	June 2027
Document Type	Policy
Approved By	Executive Team

## POLICY SUMMARY

**Please note that where we use EPIC within this policy, we refer to EPIC Housing Limited.**

This policy sets out EPIC's approach to the provision of aids and adaptations in tenants' homes.

EPIC is committed to ensuring tenants' homes are accessible, of the right size, safe and well-maintained. We recognise our moral and legal obligations to support the provision of aids and adaptations, to enable our tenants to live as independently and safely as possible.

### 1. APPLICABILITY

- 1.1 The Policy applies to all tenants and occupants of property owned by EPIC Housing Limited.
- 1.2 This policy does not apply to leasehold, shared ownership or properties with live Right To Buy/Right To Acquire applications.

### 2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The aims of this policy are to:
  - Ensure that tenants with a disability or mobility issue can live independently and safely in their homes. This involves providing reasonable, necessary modifications and equipment to meet their specific needs, enhancing their quality of life and promoting equal access to housing.
  - Support a more inclusive and accessible housing environment, complying with legal and regulatory obligations, whilst fostering social equity within the community.
  - Ensure the needs of tenants are reasonably met whilst also ensuring EPIC manages its property portfolio effectively and responsibly.
  - Maintain consistency and fairness as set out the criteria by which requests will be assessed.
  - Ensure best use is made of our properties and tenants' homes.

### 3. CONTEXT

- 3.1 The principal legislation applicable to this policy is The Equalities Act 2010 (Chapter 2, Section 20 – Duty to Make Adjustments).
- 3.2 If requested to do so by (or on behalf of) a disabled person put at a substantial disadvantage, a landlord must:
  - make reasonable adjustments to a provision, criterion or practice;
  - make reasonable adjustments to a physical feature;
  - provide an auxiliary aid; and
  - consent to the making of disability-related improvements to rented residential premises by the tenant unless the request is unreasonable.
- 3.3 What is 'reasonable' will depend on the particular circumstances relating to each individual request.

3.4 The policy also operates within the context of the following legislation:

- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Housing Act (2004)
- Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act (1970)
- The Care Act (2014)
- The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, as amended by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002

3.5 This policy considers the regulatory expectations as outlined within the regulatory framework for social housing in England.

3.6 Within this policy, the term ‘aids and adaptations’ refers to modifications or specialist equipment designed to assist tenants in carrying out everyday tasks more easily and safely.

#### 4. STATEMENT OF INTENT

4.1 We will categorise requests for aids and adaptations as either minor or major, with the distinction being based on the nature, value for money, complexity and reasonableness of the work required. Each request will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

##### Minor Adaptations

4.2 Minor adaptations are defined as work that doesn’t significantly alter the structure of the property, and typically costs less than £500; examples include:

- Grab Rails
- Banister Rails
- Lever Taps
- Key Safes

4.3 At the initial request stage, a request for an adaptation will be dealt with by the Housing Team. If the adaptation required is minor, considered reasonable and expected to cost less than £500 an order will be raised with our responsive repairs contractor. Depending on the extent and complexity of the work, the Housing Officer and a surveyor may need to inspect the property before the work is approved to clarify the scope and budget.

4.4 We aim to complete minor adaptations in line with our responsive repairs targets outlined in our Repairs Policy.

4.5 To remove barriers in aiding tenants. Minor adaptation requests will be treated on a case-by-case basis and may be identified through multiple channels such as:

- Direct request from the tenant.
- Home Visit.
- Stock Condition/Repair Visit
- Feedback from Contractor.
- Tenant-engagement events.

## Major Adaptations

- 4.6 Major adaptations are defined as work to the property that typically costs more than £500 and usually alters the structure of the property, examples include:
- Wet Rooms
  - Level-Access Showers
  - Over-Bath Showers
  - Ramps
  - Stair Lifts
  - Specialist door intercom systems
- 4.7 If a request for an adaptation is received, the Housing Team will discuss with the tenant to establish whether a transfer to a more suitable or adapted home is a preferred option, whether this be a property owned by EPIC or another housing provider.
- 4.8 EPIC does not typically carry out major adaptations but will assist tenants seeking housing adaptations services by signposting to the relevant local authority or service provider, depending on the requirement. Through this close collaboration, we will ensure tenants know what support is available to them.
- 4.9 The relevant service provider (usually the local authority) will assess the requirement and suitability of the requested adaptation, with the support of an occupational therapist's report.
- 4.10 We will communicate clearly with the relevant local authority-led Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) scheme upon receipt of permissions, which will not be unreasonably withheld.
- 4.11 The local authority is not permitted to carry out works until we have given consent; there are two stages for approval. EPIC will aim to respond to permission requests within a reasonable timescale unless the requested works are deemed urgent, in which case the response will be expedited.

## Eligibility

- 4.12 EPIC reserves the right to refuse to fund or provide permission for adaptations for a number of reasons including where:
- There is a current Right To Buy/Right To Acquire application.
  - There is no record of the person requiring the adaptation recorded as a tenant or household member. It is the responsibility of the tenant to ensure occupancy details are up to date and that we are informed of any changes.
  - The adaptation primarily appears to be to alleviate overcrowding.
  - The tenant is actively seeking rehousing.
  - The tenants' needs would be better suited by transferring to more suitable accommodation.
  - There has been a serious breach of tenancy resulting in a legal notice being served.
  - It would have an adverse effect on neighbouring properties or residents.
  - The adaptation is unreasonable for the property or would affect future letting ability.
  - (Unless by exception) a wet room is proposed for a room above the ground floor.

- The adaptation would contravene legislation or regulation.
- The alteration would require the introduction of a new service charge.

### **Repairs and maintenance**

- 4.13 Minor adaptations funded and provided by EPIC will continue to be maintained in line with our Repairs Policy.
- 4.14 Typically, adaptations funded through DFG are covered by a 12-month warranty after which time the adaptation becomes the tenant's property and responsibility.
- 4.15 We will not carry out repairs or servicing to aids and adaptations where we did not provide the equipment, for example:
- Macerators
  - Stairlifts
  - Ramps
- 4.16 Adaptations provided through a DFG that become a key component of the property will be maintained by EPIC after the warranty period, for example:
- Wet Rooms
  - Adapted Kitchens
- 4.17 EPIC will maintain these using standard specified materials, which may not be to the same specification as the original installation.

### **Tenant-funded works**

- 4.18 Tenants who wish to obtain consent and fund adaptation works themselves can do so under the Customer Home Alterations Policy.

### **Future allocation of adapted properties**

- 4.19 EPIC makes every effort for a new tenant to benefit from existing adaptations and avoid removing adaptations on void properties where possible. In line with our Allocation Policy, we will endeavour to allocate adapted homes appropriately based on need.

## **5. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders across EPIC are detailed below.

### **The Chief Executive**

- Ensures that resources are made available to allow for the appropriate management of this policy.

### **Executive Team**

- Approval of the Policy.

### **Head of Asset Management & Building Compliance**

- Ensuring the Policy and Procedure are effective and in line with relevant legislation.

### **Repairs & Voids Manager**

- Developing and implementing operations procedures to deliver the policy objectives.
- Embed the policy through staff training, learning and development.
- Monitoring the overall effectiveness of the policy
- Reporting to the Executive team on the operational effectiveness of the policy
- Evaluating, amending and enhancing the delivery of the policy.

### **All staff**

- The housing team is responsible for signposting and responding to external stakeholders regarding adaptations.
- All staff are responsible for understanding and adhering to this policy.

## **6. TRAINING**

EPIC Housing will ensure that staff who are involved in the operational delivery of this policy receive the relevant information, and instruction and attest to such.

## **7. DATA VALIDATION, REVIEW AND MONITORING**

EPIC Housing will:

- Ensure that we have accurate and up-to-date records of tenant's requests for adaptations and the outcome.
- Ensure that any property which has a major adaptation is recorded as such.

## **8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

We are committed to ensuring and promoting equality of opportunity for all. We are opposed to discrimination on any grounds, including race, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, or any unjustifiable criteria. We are committed to developing a culture that values people from all sections of society and the contribution which each individual can make. We will ensure our approach to accessing properties is considerate to people's individual needs. We also adhere to the Equality Act 2010.

EPIC Housing recognises that some people experience disadvantage due to their socio-economic circumstances and will strive to ensure no person or groups of persons is treated with injustice due to their personal circumstances. EH will also ensure that all services and actions are delivered within the context of current Human Rights legislation and will make sure the central principles of the Human Rights Act (1998) will be adhered to.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out, confirming the robustness of the policy.

## **9. MONITORING / REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years. A review may be conducted earlier if there are significant changes to either regulation, legislation, or EPIC's operating practices.

## **10. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

- Customer Homes Alteration Policy
- Repairs Policy
- Allocations Policy
- Rent Arrears Policy
- Tenancy Agreement

### Version Control

Date of Review	Reviewer	Version Number	Changes	Date of Next Review	Approved By
05.06.2024	Simon Worthington	1.0	New Policy	05.06.2027	Executive Team