



# AIDS & ADAPTATIONS POLICY



Aids and Adaptation Policy			
Last Reviewed	July 2025	Next Review	July 2027
Responsible Officer	Director of Operations		

**Policy Statement:** Freebridge is committed to providing a transparent, fair and efficient adaptation procurement and management service that reasonably addresses the identified needs of our customers.

#### **Policy Detail:**

**Purpose:** The aim is to help tenants to live as long as possible in their homes and making reasonable adjustments where it is practical and safe to do so.

**Scope:** The aids and adaptations service is for tenants of FCH living in general needs, sheltered and supported accommodation who have:

- Difficulty with normal daily activities because of age, illness, disability or other vulnerability requiring assistance
- Problems with walking or mobility
- Difficulty with personal care, such as bathing or using the toilet

**Out of Scope:** This policy excludes customers who are leaseholders or owner occupier.

The following items are not considered as minor adaptations and will therefore not typically be provided by Freebridge:

- Permanent constructed ramps
- Additional parking facilities
- Soft landscaping

#### **Definitions:**

Freebridge provides a range of options to help tenants to live independently, including:

- Making appropriate referrals for advice and information about supporting tenants in their homes
- Re-housing options to more appropriate accommodation
- Work with partner agencies to assist tenants in sourcing suitable equipment such as walking and toileting aids, induction loops or special lighting etc
- Making minor adaptations to their home (i.e. grab rails, easy turn taps etc)
- Larger scale (major) adaptations to the home delivered in partnership with the Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk's Care & Repair Team

### **Minor adaptations**

All works required at one property with an estimated total cost of works less than £1000 to include:

- Grab / hand rails
  - Floor to wall
  - Floor to ceiling
  - Wall
  - Cruising rail
- Additional banister rails
- Plinths for WC's
- Half height steps
- Lever taps
- Adjustment to door handles / window latches
- Flashing smoke and CO2 detectors
- Key safes
- Rocker light switches
- Moving power sockets
- Over bath showers
- Thermostatic mixer temperature control

Although this list is not exhaustive; any request that is not included in this list will require an Occupational Therapist Assessment before being considered by FCH.

This list also extends to communal circulation areas which service the tenant's home.

### **Major adaptations**

All works with an estimated cost at one property of more than £1,000 will be defined as major.

Major adaptations include items such as:

- Level access showers
- Wet rooms
- Modular ramps
- Stair lifts / through floor lifts
- Closomat toilets
- Specialist baths
- Scooter store
- Hard & soft landscaping
- Hoists

More specialist adaptations may be provided following individual case reviews with the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk about property suitability. These include, specialist flooring, light fitting adjustments, kitchen fittings, flagging / paving of pathways and driveways. These cases will be funded by or in partnership with the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.



### **Complex cases**

Requests for adaptations that involve tenants or their children with long term needs who have specific medical conditions and requirements will require involvement from all relevant medical specialists to ensure complex needs are met. These cases will be funded by or in partnership with the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk. These include extensions, room conversion or other significant changes to a tenant's home.

**Applications and Requests:** Applications will be assessed for adaptations received directly from Occupational Therapists, General Practitioners, the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk and directly from tenants or their representative.

### **Minor adaptations**

All minor requests including self-referrals will be reviewed by FCH and works will be instructed accordingly where:

- The value is equal to or less than £1000
- The fabric of the building is not affected
- A major component renewal is not required
- It is an essential need for the tenant to live safely and comfortably in their home

### **Major adaptations**

These requests should initially be triaged through the Local Home Improvement Agency for an assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT) or a suitably qualified individual bound by the same professional standards to determine the need and specification.

Applications received with completed medical assessment, specification and cost will be reviewed and assessed on an individual basis by a qualified Building Surveyor. The outcome of this feasibility assessment will be shared directly with the customer and the Local hHome Improvement Agency

Tenants should apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) with the Local Home Improvement Agency. The success of the application and the amount paid, will vary.

Accepted adaptation requests costing in excess of the funding available via the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) will be topped up by FCH where funding is available, on a case by case first come first served basis.

If a request is not practical due to the size or type of house, construction type, location or volume of work, tenants will be encouraged to move to more suitable accommodation. FCH will assist tenants in these cases. Where tenants need to be rehoused, all relevant assessments will be carried out by an OT, or a suitably qualified

individual bound by the same professional standards at the proposed property to ensure the tenants' needs are met before moving.

## **Support Needs**

When considering all applications we will take into consideration your individual and household situation, circumstances, the impact and potential benefit of the adaptation on you, and your support needs so that we can support you in the best way possible.

## **Accessibility**

We are committed to ensuring that all our customers are able to access our Aids & Adaptation Policy. We will provide information regarding the process, in the most suitable and accessible format for each customer. Examples of support we can provide are:

- Supplying auxiliary aids to assist in communication regarding your needs (such as sign language, interpreters and Induction Loops).
- Providing information in alternative formats (e.g. large print, Braille, coloured paper, audio etc.)
- Giving extra time for you to provide information
- Sending emails or communicating via telephone in preference to hard copy letters
- Communicating with a nominated family member or third party such as support agencies or advocates.

Customers can let us know about any additional support needed at any point during this process. We will always try and meet the needs of our customers. There may be instances where this isn't possible. When this happens, we will do our best to work with you to find another solution.

**Provision of Funding:** Budgets will be allocated each financial year for carrying out minor adaptations and for topping up DFG applications. We are committed to delivering £125,000 worth of adaptations each year, split between minor adaptations and top up funding for DFG applications.

The maximum possible number of adaptations should be carried out and delivered in the most cost-effective manner and represent value for money.

Assistance will be provided on a first come first served basis. Where the annual budget has been exhausted, further requests for Major Adaptation DFG top up support will be considered in the following financial year.

FCH will work in partnership with the Local Home Improvement Agency and other support providers where necessary, to access additional funding and support to ensure tenants' needs are met.

Where tenants can fund the adaptation themselves or has access to funding from a third party, these applications will be treated as a 'request for landlords' permission'.

**Refusals:** An adaptation request will not normally be granted if any of the following applies:

- The occupancy of the tenant is temporary.
- The property is leased by FCH and the lease terms prohibit the work intended

All applications are subject to review and full assessment before a decision is made to refuse. Should adaptations be refused, considerations will be made for other housing options or other alternative solutions. If a customer does not agree with our decision to refuse an adaptation, then they may appeal via our [Appeals policy](#).

### **Delivery of Adaptions:**

**Minor adaptations** will be prioritised and scheduled in line with our responsive repairs' routine timescales. Consideration will also be given to tenants' individual circumstances where this should happen sooner.

We will endeavour to support the process to adapt properties at short notice where tenants are being discharged from hospital or residential care.

**Major adaptions** when carrying out and/or permitting major adaptations we will:

- Facilitate regular case meetings between Freebridge, the Customer and the Local Home Improvement Agency.
- Agree a communications plan between all parties, confirming responsibilities and points of contact.
- Agree a works plan before any work commences which responds to the household's individual needs and vulnerabilities and includes:
  - How furniture, appliances, fixtures, fittings and belongings will be stored and/or protected
  - Welfare of household, pets and visitors will be managed
  - Compensation package and support for redecoration
  - Order of works and full work schedule
  - Site safety and security
- Where it is not possible to complete works with the household in situ we will:
  - Ensure that the family have a named Allocations Advisor to support with temporary accommodation arrangements (see Moving Out Policy)

- Facilitate removals and the storage of belongings as required
- Carry out a joint site inspection with the household prior to signing off work and the customer(s) returning home

**Maintenance and Servicing:** FCH are responsible for the repair and maintenance of equipment installed as the result of an adaptation. FCH will put in place the appropriate servicing schedule for components and ensure all new installs are added to the servicing schedule appropriately.

Where equipment has been installed as a minor adaptation and is at the end of its component lifecycle or is in need of replacement, FCH will make an assessment to ensure there is still a need and replace appropriately.

Where equipment has been installed as a major or complex adaptation and is at the end of its component lifecycle or is in need of replacement, FCH will support the tenant to re-apply for a DFG through the Local Home Improvement Agency where the cost can not be met by an existing provision.

**Maximising Investment of existing Adapted Homes:** FCH will ensure that adaptations are utilised when re-letting a property by advertising properties with full details of the existing adaptations. Homes with adaptations will not usually be let to someone without the need for those adaptations unless the property has been advertised for a minimum of 3 advert cycles without a successful applicant requiring the adaptation.

Where adaptations have been carried out, they will not usually be reversed unless fully supported by an OT assessment or an assessment by a suitably qualified individual bound by the same professional standards.

Where tenants are moving into adapted homes, assessment of the suitability of the property will be carried out by an OT, or a suitably qualified individual bound by the same professional standards at the proposed property to ensure the tenants' needs are met before moving.

**Policy Review:** This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if required by statutory, regulatory, best practice, emerging developments, or circumstances arising from reviews of other related policies.