

## Adaptations and Equipment Policy

Version Control						
Version	Date drafted	Date approved	Approved by	Date reviewed	Next review date	Owner
Final	01/12/2020	17/12/2020	Board		16/01/2023	Head of Property
2024 review				26/02/2024	26/02/2027	Head of Property & Assets

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy sets out Westmoreland Supported Housing Limited's (WSHL) approach to managing the alteration of properties and installation of equipment to suit the changing needs of our customer. This includes the ongoing maintenance, servicing and renewal of any associated equipment or building fabric that may be needed.
- 1.2. The policy covers communal areas and customer's homes and ensures that a reasonably practical approach is taken to assessing requests and by considering a range of funding options.
- 1.3. WSHL will comply with the requirements of the Home Standard and Tenancy Standard (proposed to be relaunched as the Safety and Quality Standard from April 2024). This requires WSHL to clearly communicate how we will deal with requests and co-operate with partners to provide a service.

### 2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that customers are able where possible to remain at their home, where the physical environment can be adapted to meet their needs and to therefore improve the likelihood of achieving an independent life within their homes.

### 3. Legal and regulatory responsibilities

- 3.1. The Regulator of Social Housing's The Safety and Quality Standard will come into effect from April 2024, with the following guidance on Adaptations:
  - Registered providers must clearly communicate to tenants and relevant organisations how they will assist tenants seeking housing adaptations services.
  - Registered providers must co-operate with tenants, appropriate local authority departments and other relevant organisations so that a housing adaptations service is provided to tenants

#### **4. Context**

- 4.1. WSHL is a provider of specialist supported housing tenancies and works in partnership with Care Providers and Commissioning Authorities to provide accommodation for customers with significant personal care needs. In most cases the properties have been refurbished with that end use in mind and should be generally accessible and usable. A potential customer's needs are assessed by Adult Social Care or the NHS with the Care Provider prior to offering a tenancy to understand any additional adaptations that may be needed. This can also be reviewed at any point during the tenancy as circumstances change.
- 4.2. The costs for any adaptations can be funded from various sources, including a combination of
- Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) from the Local Authority – this is the primary source of funding for larger works
  - WSHL investment from the repairs and maintenance budget
  - Private Funding from the customer or their representatives
  - Care Provider funding
- 4.3. Funding applications should be supported by an Occupational Therapist report in most cases, to ensure that the planned alterations or supplied equipment, will address all areas of need for the long term. Decisions on funding provided by WSHL and on permission for alterations and installations will be made openly and transparently with customers and all other parties involved. It is recognised that over time, a customer's needs may change and new or further adaptations may be required or equipment may need to be changed or upgraded. The responsibility for decision in WSHL is the Head of Property and Assets with the support of the Maintenance Surveyor.
- 4.4. There may be occasions where adaptations requests or the supply and maintenance of equipment cannot be met. Typical reasons for this would be
- When the customer is actively seeking re-housing elsewhere
  - When the adaptation is not structurally practicable
  - A Care Provider is exiting the property imminently.
  - Superior Landlord consent cannot be gained.
  - Budget availability to fund the changes and the associated servicing and maintenance
  - When the property is under-occupied and extensive/costly adaptations are requested
  - When the adaptation results in the loss of rooms or considerable space within the property (communal area or individual dwelling elsewhere), that is incompatible with the other customers e.g. a through floor lift.
  - When a request is made to provide a level access shower for resident mobility issues above the ground floor without measures in place to ensure the resident can access and egress the upper floors unaided.
  - Where a suitable alternative property exists elsewhere, and an offer can be made.
  - Future letting potential may be impacted negatively



- 4.5. **Minor Adaptions** - Where minor adaptions are needed to support a customer to remain in their home and/or improve their independence, WSHL will arrange for the work to be carried out through our contracted maintenance partner, providing the cost does not exceed £300+VAT per customer per year. Examples of minor adaptions are the installation of a grab rail or hold open device for a door.
  - 4.6. **Adaptation Register** - All equipment and adaptations work completed to a property will be recorded on a register as part of the property details and updated during void and Stock Condition surveys, including future servicing and maintenance responsibility. This information will also be used to ensure any future allocations are made to applicants requiring such adaptations where possible and will inform the maintenance and servicing regimes in line with legislation and good practice and set out whose liability that is to oversee and manage.
  - 4.7. **Maintenance and Servicing arrangements** - We will work closely via the Internal Maintenance Service and Partnering Contractor to complete equipment and adaptations servicing in line with statutory requirements and manufacturers guidance.
- 5. Policy review**
- 5.1. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.