

Habitare Homes Limited: Aids and Adaptations

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Author:	Operations Director
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1 | Introduction

- 1.1. Habitare Homes Limited ("Habitare") is committed to supporting and assisting Tenants to maintain their independence and remain in their home by adapting their home to make it more suitable where they or a household member has a disability or impaired mobility.
- 1.2. If you would like to make your own adaptations to your home, you must first request permission from Habitare Homes before any work begins. To do this, please contact us and provide details of the adaptation you wish to make. We will review your request and respond in writing.

2 | Scope

- 2.1. This Policy applies to all of Habitare's rented properties. It does not apply to Shared Owners. Any Shared Owners who require aids and adaptations should directly approach their local authority for help and assistance.

3 | Purpose

- 3.1. The purpose of this Policy is to enable our Tenants to continue to live independently in their homes and to enjoy a good quality of life through the provision of aids and adaptations, wherever it is feasible and cost effective to do so.

4 | Definitions

- 4.1. "Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)" - Government funding, administered by local authorities under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, available to disabled residents to pay for, or contribute towards, the cost of adaptations to their home.
- 4.2. "Habitare Homes Chair" - The Chair of the Board of Habitare Homes Limited.

- 4.3. "Major Adaptation" - An adaptation which involves substantial alteration often requiring structural changes, resulting in a permanent change to the home, and which may cost more than £1,000. Examples include level access showers, stair lifts, ramps, access alterations, and bathroom or kitchen conversions.
- 4.4. "Managing Agent" – The Housing Association or property management company appointed by Habitare to manage day-to-day housing services, including the commissioning and oversight of adaptation works, on Habitare's behalf.
- 4.5. "Minor Adaptation" - An adaptation costing up to £1,000, which does not require structural changes to the home. Examples include grab rails, lever taps, stair rails, galvanised rails, seating in shower areas and improved access.
- 4.6. "Occupational Therapist (OT)" - A qualified health professional, usually employed by the local authority, who assesses a Tenant's needs and advises on adaptations required to allow the household to continue to live independently.
- 4.7. "Right to Buy" - A statutory scheme enabling eligible social housing Tenants to purchase their home at a discount. Where a Tenant has applied to purchase under Right to Buy, adaptation requests will generally not be approved.
- 4.8. "Shared Owner" - A resident who holds a shared ownership lease over a home.
- 4.9. "Tenant" - A person holding a tenancy agreement with Habitare Homes Limited for a home within Habitare's rented portfolio, or a household member residing permanently in the home alongside the named Tenant.

5 | Relevant Legislation

- 5.1. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the legal and regulatory documents listed below:
- Equality Act 2010
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Housing Act 2004 (Housing Health and Safety Rating System)
 - Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Standards
 - Fire Safety (Residential Evacuation Plans) (England) Regulations, This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:
 - Allocations Policy
 - Complaints Policy
 - Equality and Diversity Policy
 - Repairs and Maintenance Policy
 - Tenancy Policy

6 | General Principles

Minor Adaptations

- 6.1. Minor Adaptations of up to the value of £1,000 per home will usually be funded by Habitare.
- 6.2. The works would be carried out by the Managing Agent's appointed contractors. This could be carried out without the recommendation of an OT or accredited trusted assessor, where there is a pressing need for such work and at the discretion of Habitare and the Managing Agent. This is in line with the National Housing Federation and College of Occupational Therapists good practice guidance 'Minor adaptations without delay'.
- 6.3. An OT is usually employed by the local authority and can advise on adaptations to allow the household to continue to live independently. Further advice on occupational therapy can be provided by your GP or local authority.

Major Adaptations

- 6.4. Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is government funding available to disabled residents to pay for, or towards, adaptations to their home. Funding decisions are delegated to local authorities and can be applied for by anyone. We will signpost Tenants to the local authority.
- 6.5. Where a Tenant is eligible for full DFG funding, Habitare will not make a financial contribution to the local authority for any major adaptation required.
- 6.6. If a Tenant is not eligible for DFG funding and unable to self-fund the adaptations, Habitare might consider providing the adaptation only on the recommendation of a qualified OT.
- 6.7. Some Managing Agents may have existing arrangements or partnerships with their local authority which could provide additional support or expedited access to grant funding for Tenants. Habitare will seek to understand and map these arrangements across its Managing Agents so that Tenants can be directed to any relevant local provision.

7 | Approach

- 7.1. Our priority is to ensure that every Tenant can live well and independently in their own home. Where a Tenant or household member has a disability or mobility need, we will first consider whether their needs could be better met through a move to a more suitable property within Habitare's stock. Where rehousing is not appropriate, desired, or available, we will then consider what adaptations can be made to their current home to enable them to remain living independently
- 7.2. Our Managing Agent will ensure the availability of aids and adaptations for our Tenants and that good quality advice and guidance on the provision of such works,

including their options and the likely timescale for completion of the works, is available to them.

- 7.3. In the delivery of this Policy, we recognise that, in all situations, we have a responsibility to make best possible use of our existing housing stock. This principle, and testing against our values, will support our decision-making. Where a home is less than 12 years old, we will check any warranties to ensure the proposed work does not invalidate them.
- 7.4. Our Managing Agent will prioritise adaptations based on both the priority ascribed by the OT and the date order of the adaptation request. We will keep Tenants updated with the progress of their adaptation request once a referral has been received from the OT.
- 7.5. Adaptations form part of the property and not part of the Tenant's possessions and upon the termination of tenancy we will expect the property to be returned to its former state unless we have agreed to retain the adaptation. This agreement will be put in writing.
- 7.6. We will advise all Tenants to put their adaptation request in writing via the Managing Agent.
- 7.7. Where applicable, we will ensure there is clear distinction between projects funded by Habitare/Managing Agent and those that are to receive an allocation of DFG.
- 7.8. The Tenant will arrange for maintenance and certification of any equipment requiring such service unless agreed otherwise in writing.
- 7.9. We will make every effort to allocate a vacant property with disabled facilities or adaptations to a Tenant or applicant who can fully benefit from those features.
- 7.10. Where it is not reasonably practical to carry out the necessary adaptations to enable the Tenant to live independently in their own home, we will aim to support the Tenant to find alternative accommodation which matches their housing requirement and need. We will signpost the Tenant to the local authority.

8 | Refusals

- 8.1. Habitare/Managing Agent are unlikely to invest in the provision of adaptations where the benefit achieved for the resident is short term, it is not reasonable or practicable, or where it is unfeasible to do so. Such circumstances may include:
 - When the applicant occupies a home that is scheduled for modification or major refurbishment within the next two years;
 - Where the Tenant is actively seeking rehousing;
 - Where the tenancy is less than 12 months old unless an OT referral can support the need of the adaptation;

- Where the home is within the defects period unless an OT referral can support the need of the adaptation;
- When the adaptation requested is not structurally practicable;
- Where a home is under-occupied or over-crowded and major adaptations are requested;
- Where a request is made to provide a level access shower above ground floor level. Future letability becomes an issue as many disabled people with mobility problems who could benefit from such a shower may have problems negotiating stairs.
- Where provision is requested for use of a motorised scooter;
- Where a Long Ramp is required to provide access to the front door but is not practically possible;
- Where the Tenant has applied to purchase the property under the Right to Buy.
- Measures provided to aid evacuation under the Fire Safety (Residential Evacuation Plans) (England) Regulations, or any successor legislation, are excluded from the scope of this Policy. Where such measures are required for leaseholders and recharged accordingly, they fall outside the aids and adaptations framework

8.2. We will seek to assist the transfer of a family / partner remaining in a substantially adapted or purpose-built home where the disabled person is no longer resident, perhaps through death or incapacity and where there is an identified need for the home. We would work closely with the household to find a suitable solution and would only consider taking formal steps to seek a transfer where this has not proved possible. In doing so, Habitare will take full account of any relevant legislation and Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) regulatory guidance or directive.

9 | Appeals

9.1. Habitare or its Managing Agent will not unreasonably withhold consent for an adaptation to take place, but should an application be refused as a result of not following this Policy, the Tenant has the right for the decision to be reviewed. They must put this in writing to Habitare Homes Chair or alternative within 10 working days and the Habitare Homes Chair or alternative will review it and provide a response within 10 working days also.

10 | Policy Monitoring and Performance

- 10.1. The Board of Directors of Habitare has overall responsibility for this Policy.
- 10.2. This Policy will be reviewed every 2 years or when there is a change in circumstances or the introduction of new legislation.
- 10.3. As part of our wish to increase customer satisfaction, every Tenant who has adaptations work carried out in their property will be given the opportunity to comment upon the quality of the work and the service received from the staff

involved. This commitment and practice will apply equally to the contractors employed by Habitare.

Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version
April 2023	New Policy Implemented	V1.0
June 2026	Policy revised and updated	V2.0