

## *Adaptations Policy*

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## 1 Policy Statement

Plus Dane Housing is committed to supporting the wellbeing needs of our customers who are experiencing difficulty living in their home due to age or disability.

We will do this by providing an efficient and effective adaptation service that offers value for money and meets the individual needs of our customers.

We will work in close partnership with external agencies to make the best use of our existing adapted homes. Home letting adverts will highlight the installed adaptation and wherever possible, homes with adaptations will be prioritised for households with a need for those adaptations in line with an OT recommendation.

## 2 Policy Aims

This policy applies to general needs and older persons housing. The aim is to provide an adaptation service that will:

- Allow customers to retain independence and dignity in their home.
- Deal effectively and consistently with requests for adaptations from our customers.
- Promote choice to customers by offering a range of options.
- Ensure the effective use of resources and the delivery of a value for money service.
- Signpost the adaptations service and other available options that improve our customers' quality of life.

## 3 Links to corporate plan

This policy links directly to our Products and Services and Financial Resilience by helping people stay in their homes longer and accessing external funding to deliver focused benefits.

## 4 Our Approach

Plus Dane offers a range of solutions within this policy designed to enable customers to remain independent in their home. The solutions may include:

- Helping customers to reorganise their home to help them manage more easily.
- Providing adaptations designed to meet customer needs so that the home becomes more accessible.
- Signposting to other agencies who can assist with the provision of

daily living aids and technology to help manage day to day tasks.

- Supporting customers whose homes are not suitable to be adapted or where the decision is to not provide the adaptation, to move to a more suitable home. This may include providing practical support to move.

#### 4.1.1 Adaptations

The statutory responsibility for the funding of adaptations is the duty of the Local Authority. Subject to an annual budget allocation, Plus Dane will offer adaptations to help older or disabled customers and their households to continue to live independently.

The maximum Plus Dane will contribute towards an adaptation request is £15,000.

The application of this Policy ensures compliance with the outcomes of the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing.

#### 4.1.2 Minor Adaptations

Minor adaptations are defined as fixed adaptations to a home with a maximum value of up to £1,000.

Direct requests for minor adaptations can be made to Plus Dane Customer Access Team.

We aim to complete minor adaptations within 28 days of the request. Examples of minor adaptations include, but are not limited to:

- Grab Rails
- Lever Taps
- Additional banister rails
- Key safes
- Flashing doorbells

#### 4.1.3 Major adaptations (Between £1,000 - £30,000)

Major adaptations are larger scale changes that may involve structural alterations and typically cost over £1,000 of which up to 50% will be funded by a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) from the Local Authority.

The maximum Plus Dane will contribute towards an adaptation request is £15,000.

Where an adaptation involves major changes that would consist of or include the removal or alteration of a physical feature of the home we will consider these on a case by case basis. Examples of major adaptations include, but are not limited to:

- Level Access Showers (LAS)
- External platform lifts

- Stair lifts
- Ramped Access
- Ceiling Track hoists
- Specialist toilets
- Parking spaces

Major adaptations require a formal written assessment from an Occupational Therapist (OT) who must confirm the home allocated is suitable for the customer's needs.

Where there has been a recommendation for an extension this will be funded by Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) from the Local Authority. If the Local Authority are unable to offer 100% grant funding Plus Dane will contribute a maximum of £15,000 towards an extension. Plus Dane will not undertake the design or construction work and will only make a financial contribution to the completed extension. We will consider applications for extensions on a case by case basis.

Subject to budget availability, Plus Dane aims to complete major adaptations within 6 months of receiving grant approval from the Local Authority in line with the eligible OT recommendation.

Major adaptation requests will be placed onto a waiting list which will be managed in date order. Plus Dane may prioritise requests out of date order where a customer needs an adaptation carried out to their home urgently, for example before they can be discharged from hospital on the recommendation of an Occupational Therapist.

If we are unable to carry out adaptations the customer will be told why and be offered, where appropriate, suitable alternative accommodation.

All mechanical adaptations e.g. through floor lifts, hoists provided through Plus Dane's adaptation programme will be subject to a bi-annual service and a bi-annual Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) inspection.

#### 4.1.4 Requests we will not consider

We will not undertake major adaptations to a home:

- In the first 12 months of a tenancy or an exchange unless the need for the adaptation request is a result of an unforeseen change in medical circumstances.
- If the home is over or under occupied especially in circumstances where we are able to offer an alternative home that would better suit their need.
- The adaptation would have a major impact on the future use of the home, for example loss of bedrooms.
- If a suitable alternative adapted home is offered and refused.

- If the home is scheduled for demolition, major refurbishment or disposal within two years of the original request.
- The adaptation would have a significant negative impact on a neighbour or an adjoining property such as restricting access or right of way.
- Where the customer has existing rent arrears, with no agreement or regular payments made to address these, unless approval is given by the Director of Housing.
- Where the customer demonstrates behaviours or has existing tenancy breaches, such as Anti-social Behaviour or home damage, likely to lead to action being taken against the tenancy, unless approval is agreed with the Director of Housing and the Director of Assets. This consideration will take account of vulnerability and diversity issues and the likelihood of the works impacting on tenancy sustainment.

#### 4.2 Funding

Adaptations are funded through the adaptations budget. However, to maximise resources, funding for major adaptations will also be sought from local authorities through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). Where this applies, Plus Dane will advise and if necessary assist the customer to apply to the local authority for a DFG.

If a customer fails to qualify for DFG funding, Plus Dane will fund up to 50% of the costs of the adaptation. In this case, the customer will fund the remainder of the costs. The maximum Plus Dane will contribute towards an adaptation request is £15,000.

Where possible, Plus Dane will also seek funding from alternative sources to maximise opportunities for customers to benefit from adaptations as well as reducing waiting times.

Customers can self-fund adaptation works to bring forward the completion date. In these instances Plus Dane will undertake the work and put in place a formal agreement to recharge the costs to the customer.

#### 4.3 Rent Changes

The weekly rent will only be increased following completion of an adaptation if the work has resulted in additional rooms. This will be discussed with the customer before works start.

#### 4.4 Rehousing Options

Where alternative housing is considered appropriate, Plus Dane will help the customer complete an application request to the relevant choice based lettings scheme.

Where it is not financially viable to carry out an adaptation or where rehousing to another Plus Dane adapted home is a more appropriate

solution, financial support to cover the cost of moving will be available in accordance with Plus Dane's Decant Policy.

#### 4.5 Adapted Homes

When homes with major adaptations become available (void, successions and mutual exchanges), Plus Dane will advertise the home as being adapted. Those applicants whose needs match the adaptations would be given priority within the normal choice based lettings scheme. The applicant will require an OT assessment and recommendation.

Plus Dane reserve the right to remove the adaptations if this is viewed as the best use of our resources to meet local housing need, or to directly match this home to a household requiring this specific adaptation.

#### 4.6 Complaints

Any customer using the adaptation service will have the option to use our complaints procedure if they are dissatisfied with the service they have received.

## 5 Assurance

### 5.1 Customer Standards

The following standards which have been agreed with customers are in place for this policy:

Plus Dane will:

- provide a named contact for all aids and adaptations enquires who will give practical help and advice before, during and after the works have been completed
- complete agreed minor adaptation requests within 28 working days from first contact with us
- consult and tell customers about the extent of the work to be undertaken and how the work will be carried out reduce any disruption to them and their home
- keep customers informed of the timescale for the work and update them if it changes; arrange suitable appointments with customers to enable access; offer, where possible, customers a choice in the colour and type of products used
- show customers how to use any new equipment fitted and provide information about what to do if there is a problem with the adaptation
- inspect all major adaptations on completion to ensure that the work meets the required standards and that the resident is satisfied with the work
- complete a major adaptation within 6 months from date of funding confirmation.

## 5.2 Performance Management

Key performance indicators will be reported on a quarterly basis. These will include:

- Customer satisfaction with the adaptation, the service, and the contractor carrying out the works
- % of major adaptations completed within six months from the date of the assessment of need.
- % of minor adaptations completed within 28 days of request.

## 5.3 Removal and Recycling

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

- Technical assessment that the adaptation cannot be repaired or is beyond economic repair.
- The home cannot be let with the adaptation, in particular where the adaptation was so specific to the needs of the previous customer.
- A stair lift that is no longer in use by the person assessed as needing it and leaving in situ would cause a hazard to the other occupants.
- If equipment is no longer needed and can be of help to someone else, it will be recycled; for example stair lifts.
- We will not remove a wet room and replace with a bath.

## 5.4 Record Keeping and Database Management

Plus Dane will store and maintain comprehensive records for all homes with adaptations on Cx and Keystone to allow the letting team to identify adapted homes once they become void.

Quarterly reconciliation will be carried out by the Asset Management Team to ensure that homes, where Plus Dane has installed an adaptation, is included in the servicing programme.