

community
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1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Community Gateway Association (CGA) recognises that sometimes our tenants need adaptations or alterations to their home to improve their quality of life and to live independently.
- 1.2 As far as practicably possible, CGA will support tenants and enable them to continue to live independently within their home and community, ensuring that their home remains safe and accessible, whilst ensuring efficient management of resources.
- 1.3 Where extensive, complex or costly alterations are required CGA will seek to find an alternative home which will better meet the needs of the tenant and their household.
- 1.4 CGA will respond promptly to major adaptation requests and work with our external partners to assess eligibility for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). Where eligible we will work with the tenant to find a solution to their needs by:
 - carrying out works to their home, where feasible, or
 - seeking a move for them to a more suitable home.
- 1.5 CGA will carry out minor adaptations on request, subject to eligibility requirements outlined in this policy.
- 1.6 By adopting this policy, CGA aim to:
 - Meet the high standards expected of us by our tenants and meet our Gateway Promises
 - Assist tenants to live independently in their homes or find more suitable accommodation that meets their needs
 - Comply with all legal requirements
 - Make best use of our housing stock

- Maximise available funding streams.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Adaptations are alterations or additions to any aspect of the property which can help tenants in and around the home and assist them to live independently.
- 2.2 In line with Local Authority (LA) guidance CGA defines adaptations as either **minor** or **major adaptations**.
- 2.3 Minor adaptations are small items such as lever taps, grab rails or handrails with a maximum value of £1,000.
- 2.4 Major adaptations include works with a value of over £1,000 and will typically involve installation of level access showers, stairlifts, ramps or adapted kitchens.
- 2.5 Funding of major adaptations will be match funded 50:50 between CGA and the Local Authority up to a maximum combined limit of £60,000.
- 2.6 There are some specialist aids and equipment that CGA do not provide. Where this is the case CGA will provide advice to tenants on how to obtain these types of adaptations from support providers.

3.0 QUALIFYING CRITERIA

- 3.1 CGA will consider requests for adaptations to any of its general needs, sheltered and supported housing tenants. CGA will not consider requests from leaseholders or shared ownership tenants but will provide advice to these tenants on how to contact their LA for assistance, and to inform them of any possible funding.

3.2 Major adaptations to the home will be considered where:

- The lead tenant or a direct family member of their household has made a request and/or the work is recommended by a qualified Occupational Therapist (OT)
- There is adequate funding available
- The property is the principal home of the person who requires the adaptation
- It is practical for the works to be undertaken
- There are no other suitable properties available within CGA's housing stock
- The property is suitable for their needs, for example not under or over occupied
- The works, once completed, will not present CGA with unreasonable and extensive costs for the adaptations to be removed (either during the tenancy, or at the end of the tenancy).

3.3 CGA will not provide a major adaptation where the works are impractical or the benefit is short-term. Also in the following circumstances:

- where the alterations are not supported by an Occupational Therapist report
- where the request has been rejected for DFG funding
- Where the tenant is actively seeking re-housing, or has applied buy their home
- Where there is suitable alternative accommodation available
- Where the tenant is in significant breach of their tenancy agreement
- Where the adaptation is not structurally practical, is complex or requires major extension to the property
- Where the cost of the adaptation is financially prohibitive
- Where the property is scheduled for major refurbishment

- Where a stairlift is requested and the property is accessed via a communal staircase
- Any property in which a room identified as requiring a major adaption is used as thoroughfare or for access to a shared space, i.e. request for a lounge to be converted to a bedroom but access to the kitchen is through the lounge.

- 3.4 Adaptations will not usually be carried out where the tenancy is less than 12 months old as it would be expected that the home would meet all the needs of the incoming tenant, unless the property has been identified by CGA as suitable for adaptations, and the incoming tenant's existing home is unsuitable for adaptation. CGA understand however that tenants' circumstances can change without notice and we will review these on a case by case basis.
- 3.5 Where an extension is recommended, CGA will seek to find an alternative home which meets the needs of the tenant and their household.
- 3.6 Where a property is less than 10 years old, adaptations will only be approved if the works will not invalidate the new-build warranty.
- 3.7 Where an adaptation requires the construction of a hardstanding for a mobility vehicle within the curtilage of the property, the adaptation will not include the purchase of the mobility vehicle or the provision of a garage, storage, or maintenance facility for the vehicle.
- 3.8 Where it is not possible to adapt a property or provide permission for the works, CGA will seek to find a suitable alternative home, either through our own housing stock or by working with Select Move partners. Where reasonable, CGA may consider installing temporary minor adaptations to assist the tenant until a suitable alternative home becomes available.

- 3.9 Where CGA is not able to carry out the requested adaptation, we may provide permission for tenants to install their own adaptation. Permission for this must be sought from CGA and further guidance can be found in our Repairing and Maintaining Your Home Policy.

4.0 FUNDING AND DELIVERING ADAPTATION WORKS

Minor Adaptations

- 4.1 Minor adaptations will be funded through CGA's dedicated adaptations budget.
- 4.2 Requests for minor adaptations do not require an OT referral however they may require written support of a medical practitioner. Requests can be made by the tenant or a direct family member from their household.
- 4.3 It may be necessary for a CGA Surveyor to carry out a pre-inspection to ensure that the minor adaption can be fitted, and to determine the most appropriate adaptation to meet the long-term needs of the tenant or member of their household.
- 4.4 If approved CGA aims to complete minor adaptations within timescales outlined in the Adaptations Procedure and no longer than 60 days from request.
- 4.5 Additional or multiple requests for minor adaptations within the same funding year will not be approved unless circumstances have significantly changed.

Major Adaptations

- 4.6 In order to proceed all requests for major adaptations costing more than £1,000 need to be supported by an OT referral, meet the qualifying criteria contained within this policy as set out in section 3 and have DFG funding in place.
- 4.7 To maximise the number of adaptations that CGA can carry out for our tenants, the cost of major adaptations will be match funded between CGA and the LA up to the annual funding limit available.
- 4.8 CGA reserves the right to decide whether or not grant funding is applied for and will only support a grant application if the qualifying criteria contained within this policy as set out at section 3 is met.
- 4.9 If approved CGA will support the tenant in submitting an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) to the relevant LA.
- 4.10 If the DFG application is successful the tenant will be informed of the likely timescale for commencing the work.
- 4.11 Where an application does not qualify for DFG funding, CGA will advise and support the tenant in applying for any other funding streams that are available.
- 4.12 In order to obtain grant funding, the tenants must fully co-operate with the LA and provide all information requested to facilitate the claim. Failure by the tenant to apply or co-operate with the grant application process will result in the offer of an adaptation being retracted.
- 4.13 Applications will be considered in date order and priority will be given to applications from children's OT's.

- 4.14 CGA is sensitive to the needs of our more vulnerable tenants and will ensure that individual circumstances are always considered when providing the tenant with a timescale for completion of works.

5.0 MANAGING EXISTING ADAPTATIONS

Maintaining Adaptations

- 5.1 Faults on adaptations should be reported to CGA who will arrange for the repair to be carried out in line with our Repairing and Maintaining Your Home Policy.
- 5.2 Lifts installed by CGA or an approved supplier will be serviced annually and our insurance company will carry out a separate annual inspection to ensure they are in safe working order. Tenants must allow access for the lift servicing and inspections to take place and failure to do so could ultimately result in legal action being taken to enforce access.
- 5.3 If a tenant's medical circumstances change which results in health and safety implications relating to the safe use of a lift, CGA have the right to isolate or remove the lift and discuss alternative solutions with the tenant which may include moving to a more suitable property.
- 5.4 CGA will not service or maintain any adaptations which tenants have installed themselves, and any related costs are the sole responsibility of the tenant. In addition, where a tenant terminates their tenancy, or decides the adaptation is no longer required, they must arrange for the removal of the adaptation and make good any damage caused to the property.

- 5.5 CGA will maintain a record of all major adaptations installed in our homes, including their lifecycle, and ensure they are considered for replacement by their due date. Once an adaptation is due for replacement, CGA will, in conjunction with the tenant and OT where necessary, determine the most suitable replacement that meets the tenants needs and is compatible with the property.

Making Best Use of Installed Adaptations

- 5.6 CGA has responsibility to ensure that we provide an efficient, value for money service and will endeavour to make best use of adaptations that have previously been installed, in line with our Empty Homes Policy.
- 5.7 As far as is possible we will aim to re-let properties which have adaptations installed to new tenants who require the adaptation and will use our register of adapted properties to do so.
- 5.8 Stairlifts will be removed as standard when a property becomes empty, or the tenant or household member no longer requires it.
- 5.9 CGA will consider the needs for adapted properties when developing our new build housing schemes to meet the needs of disabled tenants.
- 5.10 CGA may refuse the right to mutual exchange in cases where major adaptations have been completed to meet the needs of the household in either of the properties, and where the new tenant does not require the adaptations. Such cases will be considered on an individual basis in line with our Allocations Policy.

6.0 COMPLAINTS

- 6.1 CGA recognise that sometimes our standards fall below those we, and you expect and when this happens CGA welcomes complaints as an opportunity to continually improve our service.

6.2 Tenants who wish to make a complaint about any of the services covered within this policy are encouraged to do so by using CGA's complaints process. Complaints can be made via telephone on 0800 953 0213 (option 6), via email at complaints@communitygateway.co.uk, in writing or in person to our Head Office or by completing the online form on our website.

6.3 A copy of our Complaints Policy can be found on our website or can be provided upon request.

7.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 The Head of Asset Management is responsible for ensuring this Policy complies with all legislative requirements.

7.2 The Asset Programme Manager is responsible for the delivery of all adaptation work supported by the Allocations Team in relation to suitable alternative housing needs in the implementation of this policy.

8.0 DATA PROTECTION

8.1 The tenancy provides the legal basis for processing of information aligned to this policy. The retention of information will be the length of the tenancy plus six years.

9.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

9.1 This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, with a full review taking place every 2 years, to ensure accuracy and that CGA complies with relevant legislation.

- 9.2 Key Performance Indicators will be monitored by the Assets Team and reported to Homes and Services Committee. In addition, routine internal audits will take place as part of our internal controls.

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