



AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY

Originator:	Policy and Strategy Team
Approval date:	May 2024
Review date:	May 2027

1	Introduction
1.1	Pine Court Housing Association (PCHA) is committed to promoting choice for independent living for its existing residents and applicants for housing that have a disability.
1.2	To achieve this aim, PCHA will take all reasonable measures to provide a fair and accessible aids and adaptations service, make best use of existing adapted properties and will work in close partnership with external agencies.
1.3	Scope of the Policy
1.3.1	The Policy applies to all properties owned and managed by PCHA in the Liverpool and Wirral areas.
1.4	Legal Compliance
1.4.1	The statutory responsibility for the funding of adaptations is the duty of the Local Authority. PCHA residents are entitled to apply for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) through the Local Authority under the terms of The Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
1.4.2	Operation of the Policy ensures PCHA complies with the relevant legislation in regard to the provision of aids and adaptations services. The main provisions of the legislation are set out below:
1.4.3	The Equalities Act 2010 defines who should be considered as disabled and requires PCHA to take account of a persons' disabilities even if this means treating disabled people more favourably.
1.4.4	The Equality Act 2010 'Duty to make Reasonable Adjustments' applies to landlords and managers of rented premises or premises available to rent.
1.4.5	This duty is not anticipatory – it only arises if PCHA are requested to make an adjustment by a person to whom the premises are let or who wishes to rent the premises, or someone on their behalf. Requests do not have to be made formally – it is PCHA's duty to make a reasonable adjustment if it is reasonable to assume a request has been made.

1.4.6	<p>There are two requirements under the Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing auxiliary aids and services • Changing provisions, criteria or practices (e.g. allowing a disabled person who uses an assistance dog to take a property that might otherwise have stipulated 'no dogs')
1.4.7	<p>There is no legal requirement under the Equality Act 2010 for PCHA to make any changes which would consist of or include the removal or alteration of a physical feature of the property which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any feature arising from the design or construction of a building • Any feature of any approach to, exit from or access to a building • Any fixtures or fittings in or on a premises • Any other physical element or quality
1.4.8	<p>The following do not count as physical features and so PCHA will always make reasonable adjustments were requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs or notices • Taps and door handles • Replacement, provision or adaptation of doorbells or door entry systems, • Changes to the colour of surfaces
1.4.9	<p>The test for deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable will be based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective the change will be in assisting the tenant or household member who needs the adjustment • Whether it can actually be done or not • The availability of alternative suitably adapted properties • The cost
1.4.10	<p>Despite having no legal requirement to alter any physical features of our properties, PCHA is committed to promoting choice for independent living for its existing residents and applicants who have a disability or require an aid or adaptation. We will do this by allocating a budget for aids and adaptations annually, to assist Local Authorities to carry out their statutory duties.</p>
1.4.11	<p>The application of this Policy ensures compliance with the outcomes of the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England, responsibility of the Regulator of Social Housing, as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 available to tenants where appropriate
1.5	<p>Access and Communication</p>
1.5.1	<p>PCHA is committed to ensuring that our services are accessible to everyone. PCHA will seek alternative methods of access and service delivery where barriers, perceived or real may exist, that may make it difficult for people to work for it or use its services.</p>

1.5.2	Working with our customers we have established a Vulnerable Persons and Reasonable Adjustments Policy to ensure we make best use of every customer interaction to meet customers' needs in our service delivery and ensure this information is kept up to date.
1.6	Equality, Diversity and Human Rights
1.6.1	PCHA is committed to ensuring that no person or group of persons will be treated less favourably than another person or group of persons and will carry out our duty with positive regard for the following core strands of equality; Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Gender Identity / Gender Expression, Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy and Maternity, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Religion and / or Belief.
1.6.2	PCHA also recognises that some people experience disadvantage due to their socio-economic circumstances, employment status, class, appearance, responsibility for dependants, unrelated criminal activities, being HIV positive or with AIDS, or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.
1.6.3	PCHA will also ensure that all services and actions are delivered within the context of current Human Rights legislation. PCHA will endeavour to ensure its staff and others with whom it works, will adhere to the central principles of the Human Rights Act (1998).
1.7	<p>The Policy should be read in conjunction with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCHA Repairs and Maintenance Policy • PCHA Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Policy
2	Statement of intent
2.1	PCHA will provide a fair and easily accessible aids and adaptations service to existing residents and applicants that promotes choice and encourages independent living and in most cases this service is free.
2.2	PCHA will ensure it meets its legal and regulatory requirements in regard to providing aids and adaptations services.
2.3	PCHA will endeavour to promote a co-ordinated partnership with other agencies in the provision of adapted properties.
2.4	PCHA will make decisions on major aids and adaptations that meets needs identified through Occupational Therapist reports and within budgetary constraints.
2.5	PCHA will make a distinction between 'minor' adaptations (those costing less than £1,000) and 'major adaptations' (those costing over £1,000) – (see sections 3.2 and 3.3 below for further details).
2.6	Residents will be able to self-refer for minor adaptations (subject to assessment by the PCHA Aids and Adaptations Officer for adaptations costing £500-- £1000) whereas requests for major adaptations will require an Occupational Therapist report and recommendation. Any resident unsure of the extent of the required adaptation should contact PCHA for advice in the first instance.

2.7	PCHA will automatically complete requests for Aids and Adaptations costing up to £500 under the repairs and Maintenance service without any intervention.
2.8	PCHA does, however, reserve the right to seek an Occupational Therapist's report on aids and adaptations requests below £1000 in value on a discretionary basis, to ensure the proposed works meet the customer's individual needs in the most effective way.
2.9	PCHA will provide an annual budget identified within the PCHA Business Plan, which will be used as efficiently as possible to provide a fair and accessible service to all existing customers and applicants requiring adapted properties, in the Liverpool and Wirral area.
2.10	Where adaptations are required that go over the £1000 cap per property, PCHA will work with individuals and the relevant local authority to access Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) up to an upper limit of £30,000 per property and subject to the availability of Liverpool Council and Wirral MBC'S annual budget allocations.
2.11	In exceptional circumstances, PCHA may consider requests for top up funding where an adaptation is likely to cost more than the £30,000 upper limit identified in the DFG regime. In these circumstances alternative options for financing will be discussed including the tenant or applicant's own means of financing the adaptations required.
2.12	If and when the annual budget allocation is exceeded, PCHA will inform Liverpool Council and Wirral MBC and will not make a financial contribution to any further major adaptation requests from its tenants in the financial year, regardless of the cost.
3	Policy
3.1	Eligibility
3.1.1	PCHA will endeavour to provide aids and adaptations services to occupants of social housing it owns and manages who have a disability, including children who are permanent members of that household (subject to budgetary constraints and suitability of requests).
3.2	Minor Adaptations
3.2.1	PCHA will not unreasonably refuse a request for a minor adaptation or auxiliary aid, (see minor adaptations appendix). All minor adaptations requests that cost between £500 and £1000 will be assessed by the Aids and Adaptation Officer, (trained to Level 2 of Trusted Assessor) for their suitability to the customers, within 10 working days.
3.2.2	Minor adaptations are defined as non-structural alterations or additions to a home, for example - grab rails. Examples of minor adaptations are available at Appendix A . PCHA will not, however, provide non-fixed equipment to assist with a disability or mobility problem that are normally supplied by Social Services and Re-enablement Teams.
3.2.3	In carrying out minor adaptations, PCHA will in most cases follow the guidance - 'Minor adaptations without delay – A practical guide and technical specifications for housing associations' 2006 produced by the College of Occupational Therapists.

- 3.2.4 Subject to an assessment as per 3.2.1, the request will be raised as a standard repair job as long as they do not exceed £1,000 in total value in any one property. PCHA will inform the customer of the likely timeframe for completing the work when it is ordered.
- 3.2.5 PCHA reserves the right to levy annual service charges for any minor adaptation that has an ongoing maintenance liability.
- 3.3 **Major Adaptations**
- 3.3.1 Approvals for major adaptations will be made following a meeting of the Aids and Adaptations Panel consisting of the Aids and Adaptations Officer, Assistant Project Manager - Asset Management Team and a Senior Housing Officer where:
- PCHA is in receipt of an Occupational Therapist's assessment and clear recommendation that the work is necessary to sustain independent living, addressing basic needs only (with critical needs assessments receiving the greatest priority)
 - An Aids and Adaptations Officer assessment of the property is carried out
 - The proposed works meet all planning and building regulation requirements
- 3.3.2 Major adaptations are defined as involving structural alteration or which typically cost more than £1,000. Each request for major adaptations will be considered on its merits. Examples of major adaptations can be found at **Appendix B**.
- 3.3.3 When evaluating a request for an adaptation, PCHA will consider individual, financial, technical and other relevant factors to enable a balanced decision to be taken to ensure best use is made of the available financial resources.
- 3.3.4 Wherever possible and suitable for a customer's circumstances, PCHA will endeavour to facilitate approved requests for major adaptations through allocations or management moves to pre-adapted properties that meet required needs.
- 3.3.5 PCHA will only consider approving major adaptations in non-adapted properties when moving or allocating to a pre-adapted property is unsuitable for the customer or unlikely to meet critical needs (as identified by Occupational Therapist reports) within reasonable timescales.
- 3.3.6 PCHA will consider the following criteria when prioritising permissions and providing funding for major adaptations works:
- The basis of an Occupational Therapist's assessment (with 'critical needs' receiving priority over those with 'substantial needs')
 - Where there are more than one applicant with the same Occupational Therapist recommendation, priority will be given on date order (i.e. those that have been waiting longest)
 - Additional priority may be given where the requirement for adaptation is causing a current health and safety or fire risk
 - The decision will be subject of review by the specially convened PCHA Panel (see 3.3.1 above)
- 3.3.7 PCHA reserve the right to refuse the request for a major adaptation on the following grounds:

- Where the adaptation is requested in a property that is due for demolition or major refurbishment within two years
- The property is unsuitable for the resident e.g. too large or too small for their household (statutorily overcrowded). In the case of under occupation, PCHA may on a discretionary basis waive this condition where no other suitable housing is available
- The property is unsuitable for adaptation
- Where the request is for the communal parts of buildings
- The request is to address specialist needs other than basic needs (Example of specialist needs: self-washing facilities or hoists)
- The request is for storage facilities or charge points for scooters or other electric mobility aids
- The request is for a wet room above the ground floor level of a property
- The request is for a through floor lift
- A suitable, alternative or already adapted property is offered and refused (depending on individual circumstances and subject to review by the specially convened PCHA panel as outlined in 3.3.1 above)
- The adaptation requested is unlikely to meet the needs of a progressive condition or on-going health needs

3.3.8 Where applicants are in rent arrears of 4 weeks or more, PCHA may refuse to provide aids and adaptations services, unless there is a repayment plan in place and there is evidence that it's being adhered to. PCHA may on a discretionary basis waive this condition in cases of critical need or where there are immediate risks to health and safety to the occupants of the property.

3.3.9 PCHA reserves the right to levy an annual service charge for any major adaptation that has an ongoing maintenance liability.

3.3.10 Where major adaptations require replacing i.e. they have reached the end of the operational life, PCHA will reassess the needs of the customer and may require a new Occupational Therapists report.

3.3.11 At this stage PCHA will discuss with customers alternative options to meet their needs, including moving to alternative and suitability adapted properties if available and appropriate.

3.3.12 PCHA will inspect all major adaptations on completion to ensure that the work has been undertaken professionally and to check that the resident is satisfied with the work.

3.4 **Appeals and Complaints**

3.4.1 Where PCHA refuse permission for an aid or adaptation, customers may request a review of the decision within 14 days of being notified, via the PCHA Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Policy and procedure. If customers are unhappy with the way they have been treated by PCHA during the course of aids and adaptations applications, they can seek redress via the PCHA Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Policy.

3.5	Right to Buy and Succession
3.5.1	PCHA reserve the right to refuse an application for Right to Buy or Right to Acquire from tenants living in sheltered accommodation or other properties that may be suitable for elderly or disabled persons (regardless of any adaptations that may have been installed).
3.5.2	PCHA will not process any new requests for aids and adaptations where a current application for Right to Buy or Right to Acquire is active.
3.5.3	<p>If applications for Right to Buy or Right to Acquire are received from general needs accommodation, that has had major adaptations, PCHA will either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make reasonable offers of alternative accommodation for purchase if the adaptation is no longer required and re-let the adapted property (matching incoming tenant(s) needs to the existing adaptations) • Where the adaptations are required by the tenant seeking to purchase, PCHA will ensure the cost of the improvements will be reflected in the property valuation
3.5.4	In all circumstances where Right to Buy or Right to Acquire applications are received PCHA will advise tenants of the procedures PCHA will follow and make them aware of any additional costs they may incur.
3.5.5	Where a Right of Succession applies and the property has adaptations or is otherwise unsuitable for the remaining tenant, PCHA will seek to make reasonable offers of alternative accommodation.
3.5.6	If there is failure to reach agreement on alternative accommodation PCHA may seek to gain possession of the property using grounds 7 or 9 of the Housing Act 1988 (and any changes to be introduced via the Renters Reform Bill, when enacted) but each case will be reviewed on its merits.
3.6	Reinstatement of Existing Adapted Homes that become void.
3.6.1	Where properties that have had major adaptations become void PCHA will generally advertise the property as being adapted and those applicants with needs that match the adaptations would be given priority.
3.6.2	PCHA does, however, reserve the right to remove the adaptation(s) if this is viewed as the best use of its resources to meet local housing need, or to directly match this property to a household requiring specific adaptations.
4	Implementation
4.1	All PCHA staff have a responsibility to be aware of the PCHA Aids and Adaptations Policy and to signpost any customer queries that may arise.
4.2	All minor adaptations over the value of £500 will be assessed by the Aids and Adaptations Officer.
4.3	Decisions on major adaptations will be made by the specially convened panel made up of the Aids and Adaptations Officer, Assistant Project Manager – Asset Management Team and the

	Senior Housing Officer, as appropriate (on the recommendations of Occupational Therapists reports and subject to budget / resource availability).	
4.4	Monthly contract monitoring meetings will be held with the Aids and Adaptations Officer, Asset Management Team and Contractors involved in installations works.	
4.5	The Director of Operations-PCHA will have operational responsibility for the aids and adaptations service and for revisions to the Policy for Departmental Management Team.	
5	Performance	
5.1	Performance will be rated by the following Performance Indicator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Satisfaction with Major Aids and Adaptations 	
5.2	The performance statistics will be reviewed monthly. These statistics will be reported to existing residents on annual basis through our annual report.	
6	Consultation	
6.1	All staff have been consulted in the development of this Policy. The Customer Empowerment Panel were consulted about the development of this Policy.	
7	Review	
7.1	This Policy will be reviewed every Three Years (from the date it is approved) by the PCHA Departmental Management Team (DMT) to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness or as required by the introduction of new legislation or regulation that impacts on the obligations of PCHA or changes to PCHA business practices.	
8	Equality Impact Assessment	
8.1	Was a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) required?	No
8.2	When was EIA conducted and by who?	An EIA Relevance Test was conducted by the Sovini Policy and Strategy Manager and the OVH Independent Living Manager in 2023.
8.3	Results of EIA	Results of EIA Relevance Test include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely monitor spending and review budgets accordingly within the service area, producing quarterly reports that are available for scrutiny by the PCHA Board and resident user groups • Review system of Schedule Of Rates with main partnership contractors to achieve best value for money and to match service user demand • Research and develop joint procurement opportunities with other local providers to achieve economies of

		<p>scale for aids and adaptations materials and equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to develop joint register of adapted properties with other, local Registered Providers and include in review of allocations services • Join and gain best practice examples from regional adaptations forums • Develop consultation network with local authorities in areas that PCHA operates to review services • Review publication material and website content in light of changes to the Policy 	
9	Scheme of delegation		
9.1	Responsible committee for approving and monitoring implementation of the Policy and any amendments to it	PCHA DMT	
9.2	Responsible officer for formulating Policy and reporting to committee on its effective implementation	Director of Operations	
9.3	Responsible officer for formulating, reviewing and monitoring implementation of procedures	Director of Operations	
10	Amendment log		
Date of revision:	Reason for revision:	Consultation record:	Record of amendments:
30 October 2018	Policy reviewed in line with review schedule	See Section 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no significant changes to the Policy in this review.
12 January 2021	Policy reviewed in line with review schedule	See Section 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removed any reference to 'Preserved Right to Buy'
17 th May 2024	In line with Review Schedule	See Section 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised regulatory requirements have been updated at 1.4.11 • In line with PCHA Board approved decision the Policy review schedule has been extended to Three years • The EIA Information at Section 8 has been updated