

Policy:	Aids & Adaptations
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1. PURPOSE

This policy sets out how Tuntum Housing Association will effectively deal with requests for aids or adaptations to a tenant's property, either directly or in instances when a tenant has secured funding from an appropriate service provider.

2. SCOPE

This policy covers void properties awaiting a new letting, existing tenancies, mutual exchanges and transfers.

The policy applies to all tenants who have rented properties that are owned by Tuntum Housing Association.

Tuntum aims to implement this policy consistently and fairly to all tenants.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Tuntum Housing Association aims to provide an excellent standard of living for all tenants. We acknowledge, however, that our tenants will occasionally require aids and adaptations to their home.

Aids and adaptations are defined as items of equipment or special fixtures and fittings which may improve access to a tenant's home, improve a tenant's mobility in and around their home, or help with daily living.

We will only consider a request for adaptation if the person requiring the adaptation is the tenant, their partner or a member of the immediate family who is a permanent resident in the household, or would be if the adaptation was carried out.

We will not unreasonably withhold permission for tenants to carry out minor and major adaptations where they have secured funding from agencies, such as the Local Authority.

We will:

- help tenants maintain and enjoy their independence, privacy and dignity by signposting them to appropriate external agencies;
- employ a consistent approach to directing residents to seeking funding from relevant agencies to carry out minor and major adaptations;
- record all adapted properties on a property database to ensure properties can be matched to tenant's needs at the point of letting.

Although there are no requirements for a tenant to have lived in their property for a defined period before an adaptation can be requested, Tuntum would in most circumstances expect that any major adaptation requests are made once a tenant has become established in their home and not at the start of their tenancy. The property must also be the tenant's principle home and not of a temporary nature.

4. DEFINITIONS

Aids and equipment

Definitions of aids and equipment are provided by Local Authorities through their equipment loan services. The service provides equipment on loan to people who are elderly, ill or have a disability.

Equipment is offered following an assessment of need, which will be carried out by a recognised professional such as an Occupational Therapist/District Nurse. The type of equipment can vary, either to aid with stability or to assist with more complex work.

Examples of aids and equipment include:

- Environmental Controls;
- Induction Loops;
- Connection to telephone providers;
- Shower or Commode chairs;
- Transfer boards or mats;
- Specialist WC seats;
- Specialist furniture;

- Removable bath insert.
- Stair lifts
- Ceiling tracking hoists
- Through floor lifts
- Powered and non-powered Wheel chairs and
- Specialist call systems

This list is not exhaustive. Tuntum will not meet the initial or any on-going maintenance or servicing costs of the aid, equipment or adaptation. Where possible, advice and support will be given to tenants to assist them in seeking an assessment from relevant agencies.

Adaptations

Adaptations are generally fixed items or alterations to the physical structure or components of a property that would assist the tenants. For the purpose of this policy, adaptations are divided into two categories: minor and major.

Minor Adaptations

Tuntum defines minor adaptations as a fixture which costs less than £500 plus VAT. Tuntum will not fund the cost of these works and will signpost to other agencies/organisations.

Minor adaptations include:

- Handrails;
- Grab rails;
- Leaver taps to sink and;
- Internal thresholds.

This is not an exhaustive list.

We will help you identify organisations that may be able to help you with minor adaptations.

Major Adaptations

Major adaptations are those which cost more than £500 plus VAT. Major works will require an application for funding to your local authority, and can only be carried out with the approval of Tuntum. We may require a letter of support from other agencies or professionals.

If you do not qualify for help from us, we will try to help you identify other organisations that may be able to help you.

5. PROCEDURE

If you are unable to live comfortably in your home due to mobility problems, or other issues relating to a disability or poor health, we may be able to help.

Aids and equipment

We do not provide portable aids ourselves, but we can help you contact organisations that may be able to help. If you discuss your health with your doctor, they may arrange an assessment by an occupational therapist.

Adaptations

Where requests fall into the major category (those above £500 plus VAT) tenants will be advised to refer their case to the relevant Local Authorities or external agency for assessment and application for the appropriate grant, such as a Disabled Facility Grant (DFG). It is the responsibility of the local authority and Occupational Therapist to assess and make any applications for funding on behalf of the tenant. DFG is the main form of assistance available from the Local Authorities to allow a person to live independently or to be cared for at home. The grant, although mandatory and set out in sections 19-24 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, is subject to a test of financial resources.

Major adaptations can only be carried out with the approval of Tuntum. A request to carry out a major adaptation should be made by the tenant to Tuntum and include all the relevant information regarding the details of the adaptation, including the Occupational Therapy assessment.

Tuntum will review the request and either approve or decline applications for major adaptations within 21 days of receipt of the request. Due to the nature of these works, the fact that the work may be conducted by an appointed party not under the control of Tuntum, and the availability of external funding, it is not possible to give timescales for the completion of major adaptations.

Tuntum reserves the right to refuse significant adaptations where:

- a reasonable and appropriate alternative property is available or is likely to become available in the near future;
- when we feel the proposed works are inappropriate for the property concerned, and may devalue the asset; or
- the proposed adaptation may affect the ability to let this property in the future.

Where consent for adaptation is refused, the tenant can appeal to the Head of Asset Management and Investment.

If your home is not suitable for an adaptation, we can offer advice on other solutions such as moving to a home more suited to your needs. Please contact us for advice.

Maintenance, Repairs and Service Charges

Tuntum will not carry out repairs, maintenance or servicing of aids and adaptations: these will be the responsibility of the tenant. When an item of equipment becomes economically unviable to maintain (due to e.g. age or condition) and requires replacement or renewal, tenants will be referred to the Local Authority to apply for DFG funding.

6. MONITORING AND REVIEW

Tuntum will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and recommend policy changes to improve service delivery. We will record the level of aids and adaption provided as part of the ongoing Asset Management reporting framework.

The policy is next due for review in May 2019 and every two years thereafter.