



INNISFREE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

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Aids and Adaptations Policy

AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Innisfree endeavour to ensure that all tenants and their household members have quiet enjoyment of their homes. Whilst we do our best to make sure that a tenant's home meets their needs when they first move into the property, many people find that their personal circumstances change, and they can no longer live comfortably or safely within their existing arrangements.
- 1.2 All tenants have a statutory right to access services relating to the provision of aids and adaptations to their homes through their Local Authority. Innisfree work with our tenants and the Local Authority in partnership to provide a range of aids and adaptation services across our properties.
- 1.3 This Policy does not apply to tenant home improvements or alterations; tenants wishing to make improvements to their home should make their request to Innisfree through our Home Improvements Policy.
- 1.3 The aims of this policy are to:
 - Identify and work towards meeting the needs of tenants in their homes
 - Work with partner agencies to best support tenant health needs
 - Set out the criteria by which Innisfree will assess requests for aids and adaptations to properties
 - Manage the expectations of tenants in need of aids and adaptations and our requirements to handle our stock effectively
 - Ensure our responses to requests for aids and adaptations remain uniform, fair, and equitable for all
 - Ensure Innisfree comply with relevant legislation including:
 - Care Act 2014
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

2. WHAT IS AN AID OR ADAPTATION?

2.1 Aids and adaptations can vary widely, from fitting handrails by a front door, to fitting a stairlift or wet room. Most importantly, the aids and adaptations are designed to meet the specific requirements of the person needing to use them.

2.2 There are two types of adaptation – Minor Adaptations, and Major Adaptations.

2.2.1 **Minor Adaptations** include, but are not restricted to:

- Grab rails
- Handrails
- Lever taps
- Alterations to light switches, door entry systems, or electrical sockets

2.2.2 Minor Adaptations usually cost less than £1000, and are the discretion of the Maintenance Contracts Manager and Operations Director to approve the works at Innisfree's expense

2.2.4 **Major Adaptations** include, but are not restricted to:

- Level access showers
- Thermostatic controlled shower over bath
- Permanent ramp to a doorway
- Internal alterations to walls and doorways
- Installing low level kitchen units
- Installing through-floor lifts
- Specialist equipment

2.2.5 If the value of the works required exceed £1000 or extensive structural alterations to rooms are required, it will be considered to be major repairs.

2.2.6 Major adaptations are normally funded by a Disabled Facilities Grant from the Local Authority.

- 2.3 For further information on Mobility Scooters, please see our Mobility Scooter Policy.
- 2.4 When assessing the households' needs, Innisfree will need to work in partnership and be guided by some or all of the following:
- The disabled person and their carer or family
 - The Occupational Therapist
 - The Local Authority grants department or adaptations agency
 - The contractor undertaking the works
- 2.5 In our sheltered accommodation, we may provide additional equipment as a part of the service, such as telecare alarm systems. This equipment is not optional, and the provision, maintenance and servicing of this equipment is service chargeable.

3. HOW TO REQUEST AN ADAPTATION TO YOUR HOME

- 3.1 If a tenant feels they or a member of their household would benefit from their home being adapted they should contact their Housing Officer.
- 3.2 The Housing Officer will provide support to work with the person's local Occupational Health Department to clearly identify the work required to specifically adapt the property to suit their needs.
- 3.3 The Occupational Health Department should carry out an assessment of the property and provide recommendations for any work required. This should be submitted to Innisfree in writing, accompanied by detailed scope of work and plans.
- 3.4 Once received, the proposed alteration plans will be passed to our Maintenance Team who will assess the application and make a decision on whether Innisfree approve the alterations.

4. APPROVING OR REJECTING A REQUEST FOR ALTERATIONS

- 4.1 Each application for alterations will be considered on a case-by-case basis by Innisfree's Maintenance Team, and a response will be provided to the tenant in writing. We aim to respond to a request within 10 working days.
- 4.2 Approvals for adaptations will only be made on receipt of an Occupational Therapist's assessment and clear recommendation that the work is necessary to sustain independent living, addressing basic needs only.
- 4.3 We will not unreasonably withhold permission to alter the property, unless there is a specific reason to withhold it. Innisfree reserves the right to refuse a request for a major adaptation on the following grounds:
- Where the request is for the communal parts of buildings
 - The property is unsuitable for the resident e.g., it is too big or too small for their household
 - The request affects other areas of health and safety i.e., fire safety
 - A suitable, alternative, or already adapted property is offered to the tenant and refused
 - Tenants are currently subject to a Suspended Order, or a Notice of Seeking Possession. Innisfree will consider these cases on a case-by-case basis
 - If the tenant has submitted an application under the right-to-buy or right-to-acquire schemes
 - Where a tenant has transferred from another Innisfree property within the last 12 months, which previously had the adaptations that are now being requested again; unless that property was confirmed to be no longer suitable for their needs by a health professional
 - Where the building structure is considered integrally unsuitable for technical and practical reasons, for example widening doorways in prefab buildings, wet floor showers in beam and block floors etc.

- Where the tenants needs may be met by a more reasonable solution. Particularly where the Occupational Therapist has recommended an extension or major works, the tenants needs will be assessed and consideration given to applying alternative solutions, for example utilising a ground floor dining room as a bedroom, instead of building an extension, a smaller extension or rehousing
- 4.6 Where there is cause for concern, or we feel that carrying out aids and adaptations to a property is not the most beneficial approach for long term occupation of the property by the tenant, the application will be discussed further between Innisfree, the tenant, their Occupational Therapist, the Local Authority, and other members of their support group to discuss potential alternative solutions.

5. APPEALING OUR DECISION

- 5.1 Innisfree reserve the right to deny an application for adaptations if we feel it may affect the health and safety of household members or affect the value of the property.
- 5.2 If we decline an application, our Maintenance Team will explain in writing why we are unable to proceed.
- 5.3 We will remain in contact with the tenant and their support network to determine whether alternative options can be considered.
- 5.4 If a person is unhappy with the decision to refuse their proposal, the tenant should raise their concerns as a Stage 1 complaint through Innisfree's Complaints Policy. They can speak to any member of staff to raise their complaint, or write to complaints@innisfree.org.uk

6. FUNDING AIDS AND ADAPTATION WORKS

- 6.1 Minor adaptations under the value of £1000 may be funded by Innisfree, at the discretion of the Maintenance Contracts Manager and the Operations Director.

- 6.2 Where works exceed £1000, the Local Authority may grant a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). Tenants should be aware that there are financial restrictions to receiving these grants, and they will be subjected to a means test. DFG applications are considered by the Local Authority on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.3 Where the tenant's means test requires that the tenant makes a contribution to the cost of the grant works, the tenant will be responsible for covering the cost.

7. UNDERTAKING ADAPTATION WORKS

- 7.1 We aim to undertake all approved adaptations works in a timely manner.
- 7.2 Where Innisfree have approved a request to undertake minor adaptations, we aim to complete them within 28 days, in line with our Responsive Repairs Policy.
- 7.3 Adaptation works that are funded through the DFG are undertaken by Local Authority Contractors, and the timescale for completing the works will be subject to their contractual arrangements.

8. REPAIRS TO AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

- 8.1 Over time, fitted aids and adaptations will need maintenance to keep them in good working condition.
- 8.2 Innisfree are responsible for reasonable repair and maintenance of:
- Minor adaptations that Innisfree have fitted
 - Major adaptations outside of their warranty period, unless the works were funded by the tenant.

Any works will be undertaken in line with our Responsive Repairs Policy.

- 8.3 Innisfree will not take responsibility for servicing, insurance, or replacement of specialist equipment such as stairlifts, hoists, clos-o-mat, where the works were originally funded by DFG, within the warranty period.
- 8.4 Innisfree will not take responsibility for servicing, insurance, or replacement of specialist equipment provided by Social Services, independent care agencies, or other agencies providing health care services to the individual.
- 8.5 Where there is a need for maintenance or servicing of an aid or adaptation that has been fitted privately by the resident, we reserve the right to carry out the works and recharge the tenant, as outlined in our Home Improvement Policy.

9. DATA SHARING

- 9.1 All information will be stored in our Housing Management systems. All case notes, case files, and personal information will be kept confidential in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. We will adhere to the Data Protection Act and comply with General Data Protection Regulation for Sharing Personal Information to ensure that we maintain confidentiality of all parties.
- 9.2 We will share information with third parties where we have an information sharing protocol in place, if there are safeguarding concerns, or we have a duty to do so for the purpose of crime prevention under the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 (and any other relevant legislation) justify it.

10. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

- 10.1 We are committed to embedding the Equality Act 2010 into our Policies and Procedures. As part of this commitment, staff should facilitate reasonable adjustments and adapt our standard policies and procedures wherever possible, to ensure every individual can access our services.

- 10.2 To make an adjustment means to change work practices to avoid or correct the disadvantage to a person with a disability. This may include:
- Allowing more time than we would usually for someone to provide information that we needed.
 - Providing specialist equipment or additional support such as a sign language interpreter.

11. CONSULTATION AND REVIEWING THIS POLICY

- 11.1 Innisfree will measure the success of this policy in a number of ways, including consulting with tenants on this policy via our website and surveys sent.
- 11.2 We will publish our policy on our website and through our newsletter.
- 11.3 The policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or with any changes to regulation or legislation.



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