Aids & Adaptations Policy

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1. Document Overview

Purpose	This policy sets out our approach to providing aids and adaptations that support customers to live safely and independently in their homes. We are committed to delivering minor adaptations where they are cost-effective and feasible, and to working in partnership with local authorities to secure Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) when more substantial adaptations are required.

	In line with our obligations under the Transfer Promise, customers living in TRDC stock transfer properties are entitled to standard adaptation services up to £10,000, valid until 31 March 2038.
Audience	Customers
Data Classification	Internal and External Use
Review Cycle	36 months
Last Review	October-25	**Next Review**	March-28
Relevant Legislation	Equality Act 2010 Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 Care Act 2014

2. Document Version History

Version	Date	Author	Reviewer	Changes & Additions
V1	March 2025	W.Bennett	N/A	Full policy rewrite to align with current standards.
V2	October 2025	W.Bennett	W.Bennett	Policy review following customer engagement.

3. Introduction

Thrive Homes is committed to supporting customers with disabilities or health conditions through a comprehensive aids and adaptations policy. This policy ensures that customers can live independently and comfortably in their homes. Key aspects of the policy include:

- **Minor Adaptations Service**: Available to customer in all local authority areas, providing adaptations up to £1,000.
- **Major Adaptations**: For customer from the stock transfer from Three Rivers District Council (TRDC), adaptations up to £10,000 are available, applied per property over a five-year period**.**
- **Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)**: Adhering to government guidelines to ensure fair application and equal service for all applicants.
- **Means Testing**: Customers will be assessed for a contribution based on household income.
- **Urgent Cases**: Prioritising and fast-tracking adaptations where there is an urgent need.
- **Housing Options Advice**: Offering advice to customer who may need more suitable accommodation, with checks for under occupancy.
- **Register Maintenance**: Keeping an updated register of customers with aids and adaptations through the Customer team.
- **Recycling Adapted Properties**: Considering specialist adaptations for recycling to another property or advertising as adapted when a property becomes empty.
- **Partnerships**: Collaborating with key partners to maximize referrals, assessments, and re-housing opportunities.

This policy aims to create an inclusive living environment that meets the diverse needs of Thrive Homes' customers.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all customers of Thrive Homes. Additionally, provisions related to communal areas extend to leaseholders and shared owners, ensuring comprehensive support and accessibility for all customers.

5. Types of Assistance

Thrive Homes offers two types of assistance for property adaptations based on the predicted costs of the work for all customers within the local authority areas we operate in. All adaptations must aim to maintain the applicant's (or family member's) independence, ensure their safety, or facilitate their discharge from the hospital.

The two types of assistance are:

- **Minor Adaptations (under £1,000)**: No occupational therapist (OT) assessment or means test is required.
- **Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Funded Applications (over £1,000)**: Applications are made to the relevant local authority for assistance.

For customers in ex-TRDC stock, until the Transfer Promise ends on 31 March 2038, a third type of assistance is available.

- **Standard Adaptations**: There are works anticipated to cost more than £1,000 but less than £10,000 and require an OT assessment. These works are paid for by Thrive Homes. Where the cost of the works exceeds £10,000 a application for DFG funding in also required.

6. Referral and Support Process

Customers will be supports throughout their aids and adaptations application in several ways. This can depend on the type of adaptation being requested.

6.1. Referral

Customers should initially apply to Thrive Homes. If necessary, we will direct them to other agencies, such as local authorities or Social Services, to progress their application for assistance.

6.2. Guidance and Information

We will communicate clearly about the application process, available services, and eligibility criteria. Further information can be found on our website or available in printable format upon request.

6.3. Assessment Support

If we anticipate that the work will be a standard adaptation (for customers in ex-TRDC stock) or a DFG-funded adaptation, we will ask them to apply for an occupational therapist's (OT) assessment from the relevant local authority or a qualified OT.

6.4. Means Testing

Applicants seeking funding via a DFG will be means tested by the appropriate local authority. Minor adaptions do not require means testing.

6.5. Free-standing Aids

Customers requesting free-standing aids, such as toilet frames, or bed levers, will be referred to Social Services. Following an assessment, Health and Community Services may provide a 'prescription' for a specific item, redeemable at an accredited retailer. This is not a service Thrive is able to offer.

6.6. Housing Options Advice

Customers needing more suitable accommodation will receive advice and support in exploring alternative housing options.

7. Minor Adaptations

We operate a discretionary system for installing minor aids and adaptations up to the cost threshold of £1,000, without the recommendation of an Occupational Therapist (OT). This practice aligns with the College of OT's good practice guidance "Minor Adaptations without Delay" (2019 update).

The following list, based on good practice guidance, illustrates the types of adaptations typically provided under this policy, but are not limited to:

Category	Examples of Adaptations
Visual Impairment	- Staircase applications (e.g., contrast nosing's) - External lighting
Hearing Impairment	- Flashing doorbells - Smoke alarm alerts
Access Improvements	- Internal door threshold ramps - Widened pathway to entrance - Main entrance support rail
Kitchens & Bathrooms	- Window opening equipment - Lever taps - Cupboard handles - Bathroom grab-rails - Toilet flushing mechanisms
General Needs	- Door/wall protectors - Window opening equipment (e.g., window winders)

These adaptations are designed to enhance accessibility, safety, and independence for customers with various needs.

Please note: Where the total cost of the minor aids and adaptations for the same applicant exceeds £1,000 for the same property, or where there are several requests for minor aids and adaptations over a rolling period of 12 months, we reserve the right to refer the applicant for an OT's assessment before commencing any works. This is to assess whether a major adaptation or a transfer to a more suitable property would be a better solution to the applicant's needs.

8. Major Adaptations

A major adaptation is a significant modification made to a home to improve accessibility and safety for individuals with disabilities or mobility issues. The following list, based on good practice guidance, illustrates the types of adaptations typically provided under this policy, but are not limited to:

- Level Access Showers
- Stair Lifts
- Access Ramps
- Hoists
- Specialist Toilets

Where the approved works are anticipated to cost £1,000 or more applicants will have to apply for and receive a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) through their local council as part of the OT assessments, before works will go ahead. A DFG is a means-tested grant provided by local councils to help cover the costs of adapting a home. We will assist our customers to make their application and contribute on the completion of the works.

9. Self-Funded Adaptations

We will allow customers to carry out self-funded adaptations to their homes, provided they obtain written permission from us before starting work.

As a condition of this permission, adaptations may need to be removed or returned to their original state when the tenancy ends. We will not normally maintain adaptions of this type unless agreed.

10. Adaptions to Shared or Communal Areas

We will consider applications from customers for adaptations to shared or communal areas, or to improve access to and from properties with shared parts. Each case will be assessed individually, and we may charge or recharge customers, including long lessees, for the cost of these works. We will consult with all affected customers beforehand to ensure the proposed changes do not negatively impact others living in the building.

When planning shared space improvements with customers, we will ensure that the needs of disabled customers and visitors are considered where possible.

11. Adaptions as part of Major Works

Where we plan major works (such as replacing a kitchen or bathroom) and identify that a customer may have specific needs, we will consider engaging with an Occupational Therapist (OT) to ensure the replacement is suitable for their individual requirements — unless the works are essential for health and safety.

The OT’s advice will guide our decision on what changes or adaptations may be needed, ensuring the home remains safe, accessible, and suitable for the customer's needs.

12. Assessment and Approval of Adaptations

We assess all adaptation requests on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the customer’s needs, the nature of the adaptation, and the suitability of the property. The following factors are considered before any work is agreed:

- **Customer needs** – including medical, mobility, and daily living requirements.
- **Type of adaptation requested** – whether it is reasonable, feasible, and proportionate to the customer’s needs.
- **Property suitability** – whether the property can accommodate the adaptation safely and effectively.
- **Household size** – whether the property is under- or over-occupied in relation to the household.
- **Cost implications** – including installation, future maintenance, and potential reinstatement costs.
- **Availability of alternative accommodation** – whether a more suitable property may be available or become available within a reasonable timeframe.

12.1. Examples of Where Adaptations May Not Be Approved

We may not carry out adaptations in certain situations. However, each case will be considered individually, based on the customer’s needs and circumstances.

- **Upper-floor flats without lift access** – Bathroom adaptations are generally not approved because the property remains inaccessible overall. A ground-floor alternative may be more suitable.

- **Under occupied homes –** Where a customer has more bedrooms than needed, we may offer a move to a more appropriately sized property. This ensures better use of housing stock and may reduce the need for costly adaptations.

- **Customers awaiting transfer** – Adaptations are usually paused during the transfer process to avoid unnecessary work in a home the customer may soon leave.

- **Right to Buy or Right to Acquire applications** – Where a customer has applied to buy their home, adaptations are usually not carried out. This is because we need to prioritise resources for homes that will remain available to other customers.

12.2. Alternative Accommodation

We aim to support customers in adapting their current homes wherever possible. However, in some cases, we may consider offering a move to more suitable accommodation — for example, where the required adaptation is already in place, not needed, or could be more appropriately installed elsewhere.

If a reasonable offer is refused, we may decline to carry out the requested adaptation. In such cases, we will explore alternative options with the customer, including:

- Self-funding
- Applying for a Disabled Facilities Grant
- Seeking charitable support

13. Servicing, Maintenance and Replacement of Equipment

We will take responsible for making sure adaptations remain safe, in good working order, and continue to meet customer needs. This includes:

- **Regular Servicing** – Scheduled checks for items like stairlifts to keep them in good condition.

- **Repairs and Maintenance** – Issues will usually be resolved within 28 days.

- **Emergency Repairs** – Urgent problems will usually be responded to within 24 hours to ensure customer safety.

- **Customer Support** – Offer clear guidance on how to use and look after adaptations, including how to report any problems.

Please note: We this does not apply to self-funded adaptions that have been installed without permission from Thrive.

14. When Adaptations Are No Longer Needed

14.1. Reuse and Recycling of Adaptations

When a customer or their family member no longer needs certain adaptations, we will assess whether they can be removed and reused in another property. Wherever possible, unwanted equipment will be recycled or donated to local projects.

If they’re not suitable for reuse, or it is impractical to remove, they may be left in place.

14.2. Removal of Adaptations at Change of Tenancy

Some homes include adaptations like grab rails, stair lifts or level-access showers to support safe and independent living. These will usually stay in place in properties designed for elderly or disabled residents.

In all other homes, we will work with local partners to find customers who can benefit from the adaptations. If no suitable applicant is found, they may remain in place. This would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

15. Thrives Core Behaviours

Tuned-in	Customer-centric approuch with adaptions tailored to individual requirements.
Curious	Active investigation and innovation
Smart, Can do	Innovative solutions to our aids and adaptations
Ownership	Taking responsibiltiy to effective adaptions
Pride	Ensuring high-quality end products

Customers and colleagues are entitled to hold us accountable if we behave in a manner that isn't in keeping with the statements above. To be clear that doesn't mean we can always deliver exactly what is being sought. but it does mean we demonstrate empathy and provide clarity.

16. Treating Everyone with Respect

This policy has been impact assessed in line with Thrive Homes' obligation to comply with the Equality Act (2010). We aim to design inclusive services, policies and behave in a way that does not discriminate on the grounds of:

Age	Disability	Gender re-assignment	Marriage & civil partnerships	Pregnancy & maternity
Race	Religion or belief	Gender	Sexual orientation	

While we are not required by law, we seek to ensure we do not discriminate on any basis that is rooted in prejudice, for example we are not influence by:

Social/Economic Background	Body Shape/Size	Educational Background	Accent

Every effort will be made to ensure that decisions made reflect this commitment.

17. Other Related Policies and Guidance

This policy links to other policies Thrive has in place, including but not limited to:

- Risk Management & Assurance Framework

- Professional Conduct & Probity Policy
- Treasury Management Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Recruitment and Onboarding Policy
- Mandatory Training courses
- Empty Homes and Letting Policy
- Procurement and Contract Management Policy
- Living Will

As a business we try hard to keep all these related policies aligned with each other. Anyone spotting inconsistency or contradictory statements, is asked to contact the Author and make concerns known. Supporting us to keep information clear and consistent will always be welcomed.

18. Risk and Assurance

The commitments and intent of this policy is aligned to our Strategic and Risk & Assurance Frameworks, specifically:

Strategic Framework Pillar	Corporate Risk Register
Great Place to Work	People Risk

To ensure we hold ourselves accountable we will on an annual/biennial/triennial basis assess our adherence to this policy, reporting the assessment of compliance to the appropriate business forum.

Compliance will also be assessed on a regular basis through our external and internal audit programme.

As the Board has determined this to be an area critical importance expert external assurance will also be sought on a two yearly basis and reported to the appropriate Committee.

19. Policy Review & Approval

As this policy is a core component of how Thrive manages its business the document will be evaluated by the Customer Committee part of the review and approval process.

20. Support and Further Guidance

This policy has been drafted with input from colleagues across Thrive. Any concerns on how to interpret or follow its requirements, can be raised with the Assets Team.

Colleagues, Board Members and third parties have a responsibility to work in a way that's consistent with the expectations set out in the policy and its implied intent. Should anyone witness or become aware of activities that undermine or conflict with the intention this policy please alert a member of the Governance Team, or any member of the leadership team as soon as possible.