

Aids and Adaptations Policy

Asset Services

GENERAL - EXTERNAL

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1. Purpose

Riverside is committed to the delivery of aids and adaptations where they are necessary to enable customers, or members of their household, to enjoy a better quality of life in a physical and psychological environment.

To assist Customers to live independently, whilst making the best use of Riverside's Assets.

2. Scope

Our policy aims to enable the provision of an inclusive aids and adaptations service, which actively engages with all customers inclusive of race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, disability, and age.

The policy applies to customers, or associated family members living in Riverside homes, in addition to properties which have services delivered by Managed Agents.

Adaptations will not be considered for properties situated on Regeneration sites unless the projected development scale is 5 years or more.

It will apply to provision within communal shared spaces where applicable and is required to provide a sustainably tenancy for a Riverside customer.

The policy will assist us deliver the 'Our Riverside Way' values and way of working of 'We Care, We are Courageous, We are Trusted'.

It also aims to ensure that we comply with all our legal and regulatory responsibilities; current requirements are set out principally in the following:

- The Care Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- The Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc) Act 2003 Guidance.
- Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000.
- Housing Grants, Construction & Regulations Act 1996
- The Children's Act 1989
- The Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act 1970

Additionally, we will endeavour to comply with the Social Housing Regulator's standards and regulatory framework which requires us to understand and respond to the diverse needs of customers.

As a Group-wide policy it has been the subject of consultation with customers, board members, employees and staff groups and sets out to reflect their requirements and priorities. The policy has also undergone an Equality Impact Analysis.

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Riverside will endeavour to:

- Provide clear information relating to our aids and adaptations process, which is available to customers, their relatives, carers.
- Process and install reasonable requests for minor aids and adaptations within published timescales.
- Support and facilitate our customers in obtaining suitable alternative housing where a transfer is considered to be the best provision in line with Occupational Therapist (OT) recommendations.
- Manage and allocate existing adapted properties efficiently to ensure that the impact on customers of the adaptations process is kept to a minimum.
- Meet all requests backed with an OT recommendation, unless on occasions budget does not permit, in which case we will inform the customer and endeavour to undertake the work as a priority the next year.
- Work in partnership with other agencies to maximise available resources and optimise the granny funding available through the Disabled facilities grant and ensure those resources are prioritised appropriately in line with best practice.
- Work wherever possible and/or relevant, in partnership with other agencies such as health authorities, commissioning bodies, or local authorities in order to meet authority-wide or sub-regional health/disability targets.
- Design new build properties to the specific requirements of customers where possible and appropriate
- Ensure that appropriate servicing contracts are in place for any relevant equipment such as (but not exclusive to) track hoists, stair lifts and through floor lifts.
- Evaluate all requests for adaptations which are made on the basis of faith or cultural requirements, making suitable adjustments where reasonable and practicable.

To achieve this, Riverside aim to:

Adopt clear strategies:

- Devise a group wide operational procedure guide to enable front line staff to manage the requirements of our customers.

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- Utilise a statistical model built on historic delivery data to ensure that budgets are available within our business plan for adaptations, with provisions aligned to an ever-increasing aging population.
- Develop and implement a model to enable local and departmental action planning.
- Put in place appropriate resources to deliver our objectives.

Use information and analysis to drive strategy and action:

- Carry out equality analyses on all policies and significant change programmes to ensure they deliver our equality objectives.
- Utilise data collecting within our stock condition surveying strategy to ensure adapted properties are recorded within our stock condition database.
- Collect, review, and measure data on a regular basis so that it informs us of our performance in relation to Aids and Adaptations including lettings, complaints and satisfaction.
- Summarise the data gathered, within a demographic context where relevant, and report to Executive Directors and Group Board with appropriate recommendations to support assurance and management of risk.
- Provide a full explanation of why information is collected and what we use it for, treating sensitive personal data confidentially and only for the purposes of promoting and ensuring equality and fairness and improving outcomes.
- Take active steps to address any issues identified by the above reporting.

Embed best practice:

- Ensure that colleagues receive regular, relevant and up to date training and support to enable them to champion and meet the organisation's policy objectives.
- Support individual commitment to and ownership of Aids and Adaptations objectives by ensuring that appraisal conversations focus on the relevant behavioural competencies.
- Ensure that through our procurement processes we appoint partners and suppliers with a relevant, robust and compliant approach to Aids and Adaptations, as well as wider ED&I agenda.
- Provide guidance and support on all aspects of Aids and Adaptation provision by reference to our best practice group and sector experts.

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- Ensure that we adopt sector best practice where applicable.

Have in place reasonable and accessible procedures and approaches to support the delivery of Aids and Adaptations:

- Make a clear commitment to stakeholders on how we meet their particular service requirements, provide clear information regarding the service to our customers in a format which reflects their diversity.
- Support effective communication by providing a range of contact methods, shaped to customers' requirements, including effective use of digital services.
- Ensure that no current or potential customer is discriminated against by managing a request for aids and adaptations on less favourable terms due to a protected characteristic.
- Involve customers in shaping and scrutinising services.
- Have procedures in place to ensure our properties comply with our legal obligations to meet requirements arising from disability and other protected characteristics including Aids and Adaptations procedures for customers.
- Recognise that disability includes mental health and that not all disabilities are visible.

4. Further Information & Support

Definitions:

- **Aids and adaptations** are items of equipment or special fixtures and fittings, which may improve access to a customer's home, improve a customer's mobility in and around their home, or help with daily living, including for religious and cultural reasons.
- **Minor adaptations** are usually smaller jobs. Examples of minor adaptations include grab rails, handrails, window opening equipment, flashing doorbells.
- **Major adaptations** usually involve more structural alterations to your home. Examples of major adaptations include level access showers, stair lifts, ramps, extensions.
- **Equality** is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where, when or whom they were born, or because of other characteristics. Promoting equality is about behaving in a way that tackles inequalities, aiming to ensure that all staff and service users are treated fairly, and do not experience discrimination.

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- Promoting **diversity** is about recognising that everyone is different and creating an environment that values each customer and employee ensuring that services are delivered that suit all sections of the community.
- **Inclusion** is about positively striving to meet the needs of different people and taking deliberate action to create environments where everyone feels respected and able to achieve their full potential.
- **Protected characteristics** are the characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 are race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, disability, and age.

7. Appeal & Complaints

Riverside aim to meet all its obligations to carry out repairs within statute and the Responsive Repairs policy. If we do not, our customers can contact us and inform us of this. We will respond to complaints regarding our repairs service in line with our Complaints Policy and Customer Feedback Procedure.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Riverside is committed to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. We strive to be fair in our dealings with all people, communities and organisations, taking into account the diverse nature of their culture and background and actively promoting inclusion. This policy aligns with Riverside's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) and has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

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