



**AIDS &
ADAPTATIONS
POLICY**

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1** We are committed to ensuring that our tenants are provided with advice, support and assistance to enable them to live safely and independently in their homes. This may include facilitating the provision of aids or making adaptations to their homes.
- 1.2** This Policy sets out how Eastlight will support its tenants who request aids and adaptations, either directly or in partnership with the relative Local Authority (LA).

2. Scope

- 2.1** Eastlight's aids and adaptations service is available to all tenants, including their children and any other registered occupants living in an Eastlight home, subject to eligibility criteria (see Section 6).
- 2.2** Information about our service can be found via the Eastlight website, or interested tenants can contact us so that we can appropriately meet their needs.
- 2.3** Leaseholders, shared owners and tenants living in intermediate rented homes are excluded from this service, though they may wish to approach their LA directly for appropriate advice or support.
- 2.4** Leaseholders must seek permission from Eastlight before making adaptations to the communal or exterior areas to ensure structural integrity and viability of works.
- 2.5** This Policy should be read in conjunction with Eastlight's Empty Homes & Allocations Policy, Leasehold Policy, Shared Ownership Policy and Service Charge Policy.

3. Statutory & Regulatory Requirements

- 3.1** This Policy will comply with the relevant statutory, regulatory and legal requirements, including – but not limited to – the following:
 - Housing Act 1985
 - The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (Sections 1 and 2)
 - Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (Section 23)
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - Safety & Quality Standard – Consumer Standards.

4. Think Customer

- 4.1** At Eastlight, we exist to provide the best possible homes and services for our residents.
- 4.2** Our ‘Think Customer’ approach aims to guide and support colleagues whenever they make decisions that affect our residents, directly or indirectly.
- 4.3** ‘Think Customer’ ensures our people fully consider how residents will experience and be impacted by the service we provide. Before acting, our people are required to think about:
- The short and long-term effects of their actions
 - The residents’ individual needs and preferences
 - Whether their communication is clear, respectful and appropriate
 - If they can draw on any past insights or experiences to help them when making tough decisions
 - Whether they, themselves, would be happy with the service being provided.
- 4.4** The ‘Think Customer’ model is designed to complement and work alongside all Eastlight policies and procedures, including this Aids & Adaptations Policy.

5. Principles

- 5.1** Eastlight is committed to supporting tenants who require aids and adaptations to thrive within their home.
- 5.2** Any tenant can apply for our Aids & Adaptations Service, or a representative may apply for the service on their behalf, such as a relative, household member or support provider with appropriate consent.
- 5.3** Eastlight will accept referrals from a Community Agent, statutory service provider or LA for minor aids or adaptations. Minor works may include (but are not restricted to) grab rails to aid mobility or specialist decoration to assist those who are sight impaired.
- 5.4** Eastlight will only consider requests for adaptations that are supported by an Occupational Therapist Assessment (OTA).
- 5.5** If the eligibility criteria are not met (see Section 6), we will support the tenant in finding alternative solutions, where possible. These may include assistive technology, signposting to other agencies or looking for a more suitable home for them to live in.

- 5.6** Any adaptation where the number of bedrooms is amended may result in a change to the rent charged for that property. This may also impact on Council Tax, Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, as well as the under-occupancy charge.
- 5.7** Requests for major adaptations will be referred for funding through grant processes, such as the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) managed by the LA. Where external funding gaps exist, Eastlight will work with LAs to explore all viable options to champion the safety and independence of our tenants.
- 5.8** If specialist equipment is required (such as stairlifts, ramps, specialist toilets etc.), this will be signposted through the DFG or other LA-approved equipment service.
- 5.9** Eastlight will perform annual servicing and maintenance of stairlifts, step-lifts and through-floor lifts. Any other maintenance, repairs or servicing of any item provided by a third party (i.e., through the DFG process or other equipment service) is not the responsibility of Eastlight.
- 5.10** If specialist equipment (such as stairlifts, step-lifts or through-floor lifts) becomes ‘beyond economical repair’, Eastlight will refer the tenant to the LA for replacement through the DFG process.
- 5.11** If a tenant wants to complete their own adaptations (including work through the DFG process), they must apply and secure our consent first through the ‘Landlord’s Consent’ process. Tenants can contact us to apply for Landlord’s Consent or complete the online form via the ‘Making Changes’ page on our website.

6. Eligibility Criteria

- 6.1** If a home is under-occupied and a tenant applies for an adaptation, we will support the tenant to move into a more appropriate home as the preferred option. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis, with consideration given to medical exemptions, access to support services and the works required within the home.
- 6.2** Any adaptations that are inappropriate or impractical for the home, due to structural integrity for example, will not be agreed. Eastlight will support the tenant in moving to a more appropriate home that meets their needs.
- 6.3** Any tenant who has been with Eastlight for less than 12 months, and has not disclosed details of pre-existing conditions **before** the start of their tenancy, will not be considered eligible for major adaptations to their home within the first 12 months of their tenancy, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and an agreement is reached between Eastlight and the relevant LA.

- 6.4** Any tenant with pending enforcement action, existing debt or property damage will not be considered eligible for adaptations until the situation has been resolved.
- 6.5** Any tenant who uses a Mutual Exchange to move out of an adapted home that meets their needs into an un-adapted home must ensure the property is suitable for their occupation, as per Ground 7 of the Housing Act 1985.
- 6.6** The above point (6.5) can be excused if there was reasonable cause to be rehoused, and this was the most appropriate way to leave the previous property. The tenant would be eligible to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) in their new home, and we may accept minor adaptations on a case-by-case basis and upon request.
- 6.7** Eastlight will not process any new requests for aids and adaptations where a current application for Right to Buy, Right to Acquire or subsequent scheme is active.
- 6.8** Where a tenant chooses to leave their home within the first five years of having major adaptation work completed, the cost of that work will be recharged to the tenant. This will not be applied when a tenant dies or has had to move for disability/care reasons.
- 6.9** Exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Occupational Therapist, will be considered by Eastlight's Appeals Panel, which is made up of senior Eastlight staff and at least one involved resident.
- 6.10** Where eligibility criteria are not met, Eastlight will provide support as detailed in 5.5.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1** An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for this Policy was conducted. As a result, actions have been put in place to mitigate any negative impacts.

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