

the **calico** group

Policy

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1. Introduction

The statutory responsibility for funding adaptations remains the duty of the local authority which works within the legislative framework funded by the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

Although Calico Homes has no legal obligation to provide an aids and adaptations service, it is part of Calico's Customer Strategy; The Humanity Offer: to support customers in living their best lives and go one step further for our customers.

An effective aids and adaptations service is essential to meet the needs of the diverse customers in our neighbourhoods, to lead more fulfilling lives and play an active part in the community.

We are committed to working in partnership with local authorities to provide equal provision for all of our customers and ensuring value for money. Recommendations arising from partnership working and changes in law may result in on-going changes to this procedure.

Calico Homes reserve the right to decline any requests for a major or minor adaptation if it is deemed inappropriate for future management of the property or tenancy or would result in expensive retrofitting if the tenancy ends.

2. Aims and Objectives

We are committed to providing a transparent and efficient aids and adaptations service that addresses the needs of our customers and the requirements of statutory legislation. The long term aims and objectives of the Policy are:

- To enable our customers to maintain their independence and quality of life.
- Maximise the impact we make in helping customers live their best life.
- Achieve continuous improvement in the provision of long-term, high-quality housing service.
- Establish and maintain good relationships with customers, based on trust and considering individual needs.
- Contribute effectively, as a delivery mechanism, for the implementation of the local authority's statutory duties, in respect of the provision of aids and adaptations throughout the borough.
- Ensure that we achieve ongoing compliance with all applicable legislation.

The policy supports delivery of the Calico Homes vision and strategic objectives as set out below.

The Calico Homes Vision

"Going one step further with customers and local communities to provide affordable, safe and quality homes and personalised services; supporting customers to live their best lives in challenging times."

The Calico Homes objectives:

- To support customers to sustain tenancies.
- To provide good quality and personalised repairs, customer, and neighbourhood services.
- To develop trusting relationships and to empower customers and communities to take the lead on the things that matter most.
- To strengthen the business so it is strong, well-governed, environmentally friendly and provides value for money.

The Policy is to be:

- Easily understood by staff & customers
- Fair and equitable
- Effective and efficient
- Easily accessible & barrier free

3. Scope

The aids and adaptation service will be managed by the Asset Management Team who will liaise with other departments within Calico Homes and the Local Authority to ensure efficient, good quality and value for money delivery.

4. Aids and Adaptations Policy

4.1. What are aids and adaptations?

Aids and adaptations are minor or major alterations, fittings or specialist equipment that enable customers and their families to overcome complex needs and mobility difficulties in their home and make them more suited to their requirements.

4.2. Minor: Aids and adaptations

Minor aids or adaptations can be classed as the following:

- Items which cost less than £1,000 in materials.
- Items that are easily fitted and can be completed in 1 working day.

Typical examples of this type of request include:

- Additional banister rail.
- Internal or external grab rails.
- Lever taps.

This is not an exhaustive list and additional minor adaptations identified by the local authority, customer or their support team will be taken into consideration.

4.3. Major: Aids and adaptations

Major aids and adaptations can be classed as the following:

- Items which cost more than £1,000 in materials.
- Items which are fixed onto the property and require more than 1 working day to complete.
- Items which become a permanent / long term fixture to the Asset.

Typical examples of this type of request include:

- External wooden or metal handrails.
- External access ramp including level access threshold.
- Widening door openings.
- Kitchen adaptations.
- Stair lifts.
- Ceiling track hoists.
- Bathroom alterations.
- Property extension.

This is not an exhaustive list and additional major adaptations identified by the local authority, customer or their support team will be taken into consideration.

4.4. Adaptations and Tenancy Types

4.4.1. Housing for older people accommodation.

Housing for older people accommodation is a property which has been designed to meet the needs of elderly or vulnerable customers. The schemes consist of ground floor & first floor accommodation such as flats and bungalows. Customers living in a sheltered scheme incur a support charge to cater for a unique service delivered by the Independent Living Team.

Requests for a major aid or adaptation to be completed in sheltered accommodation will be reviewed and, in most cases, accepted to have the adaptation installed.

4.4.2. Supported Housing/ Living accommodation.

Calico Homes provides accommodation to support individuals and families who have a range of vulnerabilities and needs including but not limited to homelessness, domestic abuse, substance misuse, learning disabilities and autism, mental health issues, physical disabilities. These customers live in supported housing/living properties and can have tenure which is either short term (up to 2 years) or long term (home for life).

Where these customers require aids and adaptations to support their changing needs, the service will work collaboratively with statutory services to seek DFG grants for these adaptations to be made.

However, Calico Homes will also consider minor aids and adaptations on an individual needs led basis.

4.4.3 General needs accommodation.

General needs accommodation are standard properties consisting of flats and houses, customers living in general need's accommodation do not incur any support charges.

Requests for major aids and adaptations are less likely to be carried out on a general need's family home unless no other solution is available. All requests will although be considered on an individual basis.

Areas that will be considered:

- Family makeup
- Length of time in current property
- Health restrictions
- Family support
- Diversity & vulnerabilities
- Cost to retrofit

Requests for a major aid or adaptation to be completed in general need's accommodation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the "Decision Panel".

No major aid or adaptation will be considered within the first 12 months of the tenancy commencing in general needs accommodation, in line with section 2 Maintenance and Home Improvements section of the Calico Homes Tenancy Agreements however all requests for major adaptations will be reviewed by the "Decision Panel" which.

4.5. Decision Panel

The Decision Panel consists of Head of Assets & Development, Head of Repairs & Head of Neighbourhoods who will complete a full analysis of a major adaptation request for a general needs home to agree a way forward based on the following:

- Customer and family dynamics
- Asset type
- Long term benefit to the customer
- Long term benefit to the asset
- Maintenance of the adaptation
- Any financial implications

The final decision will be confirmed via e-mail vote to approve or decline and results saved in property file.

4.6. Aids and Adaptations: Installations

4.6.1. Local Authority: Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

Calico Homes will review / accept requests from the Local Authority for minor and major adaptation installation requests on a Calico Homes asset in line with the Policy.

4.6.2. NHS: Support Providers

Calico Homes will review / accept requests from the NHS / support providers such as Occupational Health service for minor and major adaption installation requests on a Calico Homes asset in line with the Policy.

4.7. Alternative Options

4.7.1. Re-Housing

Where possible a discussion with the Neighbourhood Officer will take place regarding the possibility of re-housing to a more suitable property or whether an alternative solution can be reached, to ensure value for money and better living conditions for the customer.

4.7.2. Customer Installations

In circumstances where Calico Homes decide to decline the request for an adaptation, we may grant consent for the customer to undertake the work themselves.

Customers will have submit a request permission in writing to Calico Homes in line with the Permission policy, detailing what work they entail to complete, and we will respond either declining or accepting their request.

Any works completed will be subject of a post inspection by our Technical Officers to ensure that the works have been carried out to an acceptable standard and in line with agreed specification.

Customers who install their own adaptations are advised that they are responsible for any servicing, maintenance or repairs that may be required. We will obtain this information on a yearly basis for our records.

At the end of the tenancy customers will be required to remove and make good any damage caused by the adaptation. Alternatively, if Calico agrees, the customer can sign over ownership free of charge and we will take responsibility for alterations.

5. Responsibility

5.1. Management

The aids and adaptation service will be managed by the Asset Management Team who will liaise with other departments within Calico Homes and the Local Authority to ensure efficient delivery.

The Asset Management Team will record installation of all major adaptations on the Planned Maintenance system to ensure up to date asset information is available.

5.2. Installations

Aids and adaptation installations will take place via:

- Local Authority: Disabled Facilities Grant
- Support Providers: Own funding
- Customers – own funding

5.3. Maintenance

Installations completed by the Local Authority or Support Providers will be managed by the Local Authority for the initial 12-month defect period.

The Asset Team will update records of all major adaptations and obtain confirmation on future maintenance responsibility whether the adaptation is now Calico Homes' asset to maintain or if a long term maintenance package is in place with the installation company. Planned Maintenance will be updated to record maintenance responsibilities annually.

5.4 Stairlift maintenance

Yearly servicing will be completed by Calico Homes Compliance Team and will be updated on planned maintenance.

5.5 Reasonable Adjustments

It is our policy to ensure that discretion is used in cases of identified vulnerabilities such as disability, frailty, domestic abuse, concern for welfare or any other identified need. Calico will use information provided by customers and held in our systems to assist in identifying responsibilities. We will also ask customers if there are any issues that need to be considered to help us make appropriate decisions when offering a tenancy.

In cases where abuse is identified or suspected, a safeguarding notification will be made. See the Safeguarding Procedure.

6. Regulatory and Legal Compliance

- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Equality Act 2010

7. Monitoring

The aids and adaptation service will be monitored by the Asset Management Team and the Planned Maintenance system updated to monitor all adaptations.

Customer feedback received via transactional surveys and the Tenant Satisfaction Measures will be used to actively improve the service being offered.

8. Links with other Calico Strategies, Policies and Procedures

- The Humanitarian Offer – Calico Group Customer Strategy
- Starter Tenancy Procedure
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Permission policy
- Disability discrimination Act
- Community Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Lettings & Allocations Policy
- Tenancy Sustainment Policy
- Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Tenancy Policy