

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how RMHS supports residents with disabilities or health conditions by providing timely and appropriate aids and adaptations to their homes. The aim is to enable independent living, promote dignity, and ensure our homes remain accessible, safe, and suitable for a diverse resident population.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by the following legislation and guidance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Care Act 2014
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Social Services and Well-being (**Wales**) Act 2014
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005
- European Commission Human Rights Act 1998
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Building Safety Act 2022

3. Policy Statement and Approach

We are committed to ensuring that:

- Residents with disabilities have equal access to suitable, safe, and sustainable housing.
- Our homes can be adapted to meet individual needs wherever feasible.
- We work in partnership with local authorities, occupational therapists, and contractors to deliver effective adaptations.
- We make timely decisions and provide clear communication throughout the process.
- Residents applying for aids and adaptations are treated in a fair and equitable way.

4. Principles

- **Accessibility and Inclusion:** We will work to eliminate barriers in our homes that prevent full participation in daily life.
- **Resident-Led:** We value resident input and aim to tailor adaptations to individual needs.
- **Timeliness:** We aim to process minor adaptations within 28 days and major adaptations within agreed local timeframes.
- **Partnership Working:** We collaborate with health, social care, and local authorities to coordinate funding and delivery.
- **Value for Money:** We ensure adaptations are cost-effective, sustainable, and aligned with asset management plans.
- **Transparency:** We provide clear guidance on eligibility, funding, and timescales.

5. Key terms and definitions

Aids and adaptations are alterations or improvements carried out to a resident with a disability's home to enable them to continue to carry out day to day activities.

Aids are equipment or devices that assist the user such as bath seats, vibrating pillows linked to fire/smoke alarm systems, and toilet seats and frames.

Adaptations are categorised as:

- Minor adaptations including, but not limited to, internal door threshold ramps, lever taps, grab rails, moving door handles and power sockets.
- Major adaptations including, but not limited to, provision of lifting aids, stair lift installation, level-access showers and installation of a wet room.

A disability is defined under the Equalities Act 2010 as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Occupational therapists (OT) are health care professionals. Following receipt of a referral, the OT will carry out an assessment of the need for aids and adaptations in the resident's home. If an independent occupational therapist is used by us, they must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a means tested grant provided by Local Authorities to cover the cost of providing adaptations and access to essential facilities that enable a disabled person to continue living at their property. The local authority must be satisfied that the adaptation is "necessary and appropriate" to meet the person's needs and that the works are reasonable and can be done with regard to the age and condition of the property.

6. Operational Specifics

- In the first instance, any enquiries about Aids and Adaptations will be directed to Housing Officer to support the process. The Housing Officer will be the main point of contact for the resident throughout the process.
- **Occupational Therapist (OT) Assessment** - Prior to any aids and adaptations being agreed, an OT report is needed, so that the correct aids and adaptations are installed and any wider health needs are identified. The CEO will review, and quality check, all OT reports before they are provided to the resident. If the resident wishes to see a copy of the OT report the surveyor to arrange to take a hard copy, or email it to the resident, whilst at the visit. Only Aids and Adaptations that are recommended by an approved OT Report will be carried out, and they must be in the place and to the specification that the OT recommends.
- **Aids** Generally, aids are not linked to the property, so would not ordinarily be provided by RMHS. Residents can get help and advice regarding these items through the local authority, GP, hospital or other health services.
- **Minor Adaptations:** e.g. grab rails, handrails and half steps. RMHS will in the first instance ask the resident to contact Adult Social Care who will normally supply and fit these adaptations. The Housing Officer can assist if needed. If Adult Social Care will not pay for these directly, we will ask the resident to apply for DFG. In exceptional circumstances, RMHS may provide minor adaptations.
- **Major Adaptations:** e.g. level access showers, stairlifts, ramped access, or ground floor facilities.
 - We only accept requests for major adaptations that have been assessed and recommended by an occupational therapist (OT).
 - For all major adaptations, we ask residents to apply to their local authority for a DFG to cover the cost of the aids and adaptations. Where needed, the Housing Officer will signpost residents to local community organisation who can assist in making the application.
 - If the local authority fails to award a DFG, or the grant they allocate results in a shortfall, we may consider fund-matching or funding the whole cost of a major adaptation to a property if an OT assessment has been made.
 - If there is delay in a decision about awarding DFG, RMHS may seek alternative funding sources, for example from the Synod. This will be decided on a case by case basis and only when the delay is significant.
 - It may be for major adaptations, where people do not meet DFG criteria, a multi-agency meeting will be called with all relevant agencies to discuss the best course of action, for example, splitting the funding or forming joint agreements with external agencies.
- **Eligibility:** The resident or a household member must have a disability or long-term health condition, documented in an OT assessment and adaptations must be necessary and reasonable.



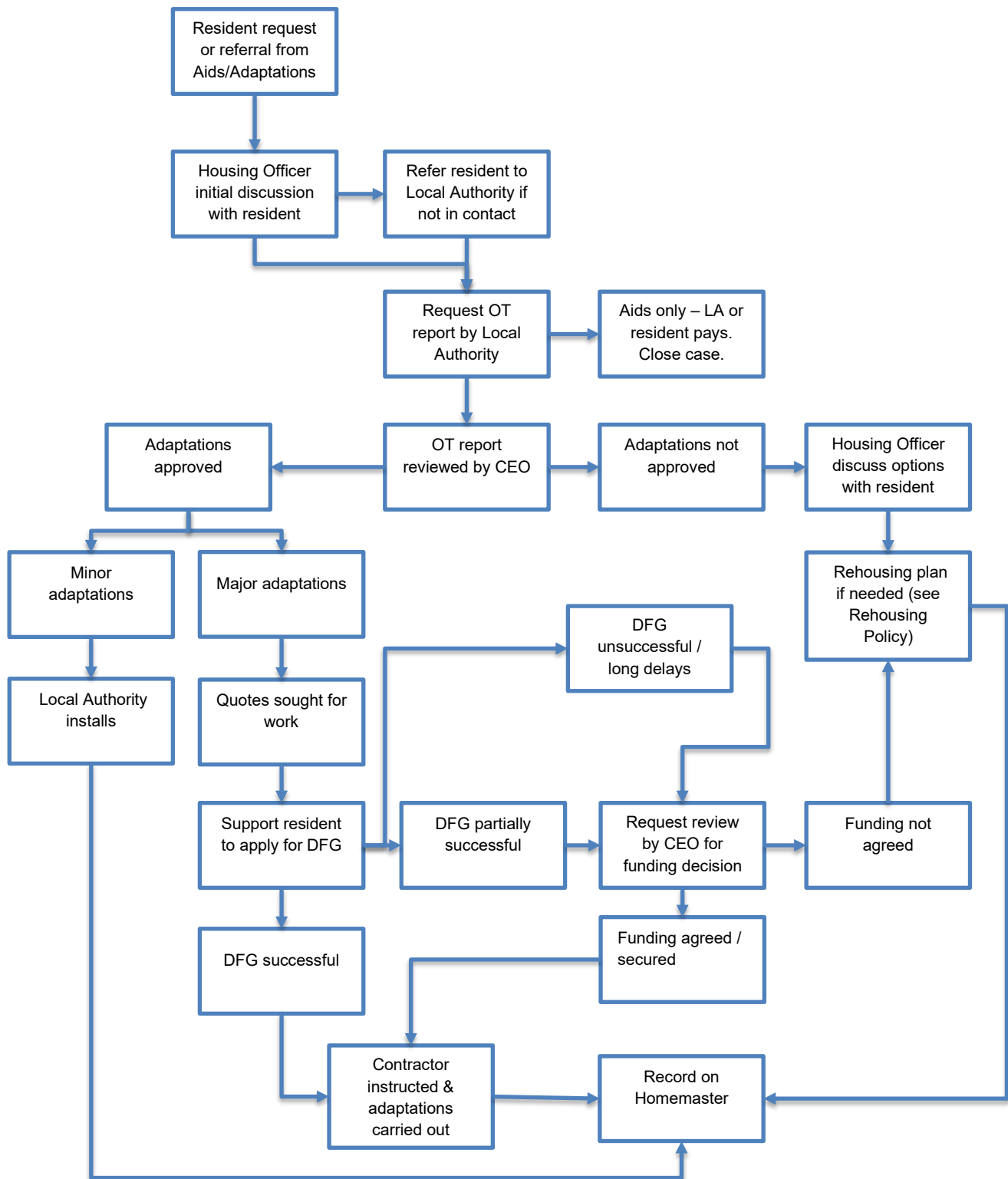
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- **Limitations:** Adaptations may not be approved where the property is unsuitable (e.g. structural barriers), the resident plans to move, or the cost is disproportionate. For example, where it is not physically possible to alter the property in the requested way, the aid/adaption would involve big structural works, significantly devalue the property (for example installing a passenger lift) or if an adaptation would present a health and safety risk. In this situation, we work with the resident and, where appropriate, their occupational therapist to consider other options such as suitable alternative accommodation.
- **Rehousing:** RMHS may support a move to more suitable accommodation where an adaptation is unfeasible. This may be to local authority sheltered housing or other retirement housing which the resident would need to source independently. Rehousing by RMHS to an alternative RMHS property is only considered in exceptional circumstances.
- **Resident Responsibilities:** Residents must not carry out adaptations. Adaptations must be used and maintained appropriately. At the end of a tenancy any Aids must be disposed of or returned to the local authority by the resident or next of kin.
- Adaptations will be carried out by **approved contractors** with regard to health and safety, quality, and resident satisfaction.
- **Appeals and Complaints** Residents can appeal decisions about adaptations through RMHS's complaints process. We will respond in line with our complaints policy, ensuring fairness and transparency.
- **Adaptations required prior to move in.** If it is known that an prospective resident requires an adapted property, RMHS will seek a suitable property to purchase. However, if this is not available, and adaptations are required to the identified property, this will require an OT assessment and will follow the process outlined above.

7. Monitoring and Record-Keeping

- All requests, assessments, decisions, and completed works will be recorded in our housing management system, in the adaptations section and on the property profile.
- Any aid or adaptation that then requires a compliance check (i.e. a stairlift) will be added to the compliance system and scheduled for the appropriate check.
- We will monitor the timeliness, costs, and outcomes of adaptations, reporting annually to the Board.
- Feedback from residents will be collected post-adaptation to inform service improvement.

8. Procedure (Flowchart)



9. Version Control

Version: 1.0

Review cycle: Every 3 years unless there is a significant incident or a change to regulations

Approval Date: September 2025

Review Date: September 2028