



AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Erimus Housing Limited has adopted and is committed to the social model of disability. The focus of our approach is to provide solutions for people experiencing a disabling environment in order to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for individuals and their families.
- 1.2 Erimus Housing Limited aims to provide an efficient, timely and sensitive adaptations service, by targeting investment in housing that can be recycled and sustained for future households that require adaptations. This process will be aided by minimising the installation of 'short life' major adaptations to family homes and offering incentive via financial support and assistance to those households agreeing to transfer.
- 1.3 Erimus Housing Limited adopts a customer focused approach to all aspects of our service delivery and we will consult, inform and involve residents at all stages of the adaptations process.
- 1.4 While providing tenants with suitable housing for their individual health needs is the key priority, the suitability and future use of the housing stock must be considered. This policy sets out the ways in which stock use can be maximised and households provided with alternative suitable adapted homes.
- 1.5 This policy outlines our principles and approach to dealing with aids and adaptations. Details of the process and practical implementation of the policy are contained within the aids and adaptations procedure. A summary format of this policy is available to customers.
- 1.6 Erimus Housing Limited has an annual budget for undertaking adaptations.

The detail of this budget is set out below.

| Financial Year | Spend (£) |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| 15 Nov 2004 – 31 March 2005 | 243,750 |
| 1 April 2005 – 31 March 2006 | 650,000 |
| 1 April 2006 – 31 March 2007 | 650,000 |
| 1 April 2007 – 31 March 2008 | 600,000 |

| | |
|------------------------------|---------|
| 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009 | 550,000 |
| 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010 | 500,000 |
| 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011 | 500,000 |
| 1 April 2011 – 31 March 2012 | 500,000 |
| 1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013 | 500,000 |
| 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014 | 500,000 |

- 1.7 Erimus Housing Limited deliver their adaptations service in partnership with the Local Authority and Health service. This partnership is supported by an agency agreement. The detail of this agreement is contained in the transfer agreement between Middlesbrough Council and Erimus Housing Limited.

2. REFERENCES

2.1 External

Legislation and regulation:

- NHS & Community Care Act 1990;
- Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 and Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000;
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970;
- Children Act 1989;
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005;
- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996;
- Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) order 2002;
- The Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc) Act 2003 Guidance;
- National service framework for older people (2001) DoH;
- Delivering Housing Adaptations for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide (2006) DCLG
- KLOE 3: Stock investment and asset management;
- Disability Equality Scheme (2006) Housing Corporation

2.2 Internal

Business plan/Corporate objectives:

Erimus has established a Disabled Persons Housing Service, which has received accreditation from the National Disabled Persons Housing Service for the work it undertakes. The objectives are to develop existing processes for adaptation applications and

implement improvements that are customer focused and deliver value for money as well as providing sustainability within the Disabled Persons Housing market.

Related documents:

- Repairs and maintenance policy and procedure
- Asset management strategy
- CBL scheme
- Lettings policy
- Equality and diversity strategy
- Supporting People
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Action Plan
- Transfer agreement
- Strategic Plan

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Aid or general provision of general equipment. Any equipment which is provided that is not a permanent fixture to the property, excluding ceiling track hoists. Aids are generally provided by Social Services.

- Adaptation – an alteration to the property, to aid the applicant with a disability, which is fixed i.e. grab rails, ramps etc.
- Minor adaptation – an adaptation which needs little or no technical involvement up to the cost of £1500 i.e. grab rails, ramps. The only exemption to this rule is over bath showers and stair lifts which require technical involvement to assess the feasibility of the installation within the property.
- Major adaptation – a complex adaptation which needs technical involvement in assessing the feasibility and sustainability of an adaptation within the property over the value of £1500. i.e. structural changes to the fabric of the property.

4. POLICY CONTENT

4.1 Information and access to aids and adaptations

4.1.1 Erimus tenants are able to access the service directly through a variety of mediums e.g. letter, telephone, or office visit; alternatively access can be sought via support and advocacy agencies. The service is promoted by a suite of leaflets which are available within all Erimus Housing Limited customer access points. Access to Disabled Facilities Grant funding for Erimus Housing Limited tenants is governed by an agency agreement between Erimus Housing Limited and Middlesbrough Council. The detail of the agreement is contained within the transfer agreement between Erimus Housing Limited and Middlesbrough Council.

4.2 Dealing with minor adaptations

4.2.1 Minor Adaptation requests are assessed by the OT/OTA any adaptations which can be progressed without the need for a visit from a technical officer i.e. grab rail, rails at entrance door, second banister rail, Lever tap, may be ordered direct by the technical admin officer, OT or OTA reducing waiting periods. Minor adaptations are adaptations up to the cost of £1500 that may not need a technical officer to assess suitability.

4.3 Assessment by an Occupational Therapist

4.3 As part of the partnership between Erimus Housing Limited and Middlesbrough Council, Erimus Housing has a resident Occupational Therapist and Occupational Therapist Assistant.

4.4 Priority systems

4.4.1 Tenants with a disability or illness who require a more major adaptation to the property will be assessed using the nationally prescribed priority system and placed in one of three levels of priority. The level of priority will be determined by an Occupational Therapist.

- Priority 1
People suffering terminal illness, with 6 months life expectancy or less will be provided the appropriate adaptations and/or aids to minimise risk and facilitate access to amenities within their home. This generally means temporary removable adaptations. The national timescale for this priority is 4 weeks from assessment to completion of work.
- Priority 2
People with a rapidly deteriorating condition, at risk of injury, have no access to a w.c./wash hand basin, no access to the dwelling or who have unsatisfactory sleeping arrangements or urgent bathing needs due to their condition, are placed in this category. The national timescale for this priority is 8 weeks from assessment to completion of work.
- Priority 3
This category is used for people with a condition which is slow or has no deterioration or they have difficulty bathing or have heating/ lighting/power requirements or require a car hard standing or access to food preparation. The national timescale for this priority is 12 weeks from assessment to completion of work.

4.5 Rehousing as an alternative

4.5.1 Assistance will be offered to households whose current home is unsuitable for major adaptation, when the investment in major adaptation cannot be recycled or maintained for future disabled tenants. Transfer to

suitable alternative housing, or housing suitable for adaptation is generally the preferred option for meeting need in such cases.

4.5.2 Tenants considering the rehousing option will receive financial assistance to cover relocation expenses. This will cover all reasonable costs incurred to relocate as set out in the Homeless and Disturbance Payment Policy.

4.5.3 The condition of the alternative property is also a significant influencing factor for tenants considering transfer. In order to aid the transfer process the property should be brought up to a reasonable letting standard which may also include basic decorating. The costs associated with relocation can be off-set against the savings made to the adaptations budget and by the targeting of resources into properties that can be sustained for future households.

4.5.4 Financial support and assistance will be offered to tenants agreeing a transfer to suitable housing in the following circumstances:

- The cost of the major adaptation is in excess of £4000 (an approximate guide).
- The recommended adaptations are non-sustainable when no longer required by the disabled tenant.

4.6 Planned maintenance and improvement programmes

4.6.1 Delivering adaptations as part of mainstream improvement programmes is preferable where possible and will help Erimus Housing provide value for money and cost savings.

4.7 Lifetime homes

4.7.1 Where improvements are scheduled, we will aim to enhance the property to a lifetime homes standard where possible.

New properties built on behalf of Erimus Housing for rent will be built to the Housing Corporation "Scheme Development Standards" to ensure homes provide basic levels of accessibility to amenities. Where appropriate, Erimus Housing will look to provide purpose built fully adapted accommodation for specialist needs.

4.8 Links to Choice Based lettings

4.8.1 All properties available for allocation regardless of adaptations will be placed on the Choice Based Lettings bidding cycle, in line with guidelines from the Audit Commission. This ensures the process is open and transparent and still offers choice to those who require an adapted property.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 5.1 Erimus Housing recognises that it operates in a community within which there is wide social diversity, and is committed to providing equal opportunities and valuing diversity.
- 5.2 In the delivery of our aids and adaptations scheme, we aim to treat all customers fairly, and with respect and professionalism regardless of their gender, race, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation and marital status.
- 5.3 To enable all residents to have clear information and equal access to our aids and adaptations service, Erimus Housing publishes clear information in a range of appropriate languages and formats and through a range of media. Feedback is also accepted through a variety of different routes to reflect individual customer's preferences or needs.
- 5.4 To help demonstrate that our approach to managing aids and adaptations is fully in keeping with our equality and diversity, we will collect equalities information on tenants who have accessed different elements of this service, including routes of access via different funding streams. This will assist in establishing whether there are higher (or significantly lower) aids and adaptations being delivered to particular groups. This will feed into our monitoring and review processes.
- 5.5 Full details of our approach are set out in our Equality and Diversity Strategy.

6. CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Erimus Housing recognises the importance of working in partnership with our customers to develop and continuously improve our services and raise standards.
- 6.2 Erimus Housing actively involves all customers in at the beginning of decision making processes and ensures tenants are empowered to play a part in wider consultation and involvement structures, as detailed in full in our Resident Involvement Strategy.
- 6.3 To demonstrate this commitment, this policy:
 - will be reviewed in consultation with service users and customers;
 - involves customers in the monitoring and testing of service delivery standards laid out in this policy and relevant procedures;
 - publishes information in relation to performance against the aims and standards set down by this policy;
 - will be developed and reviewed in light of customer feedback, comments and complaints.
 -

7. POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

7.1 Monitoring

7.1.1 The monitoring of outcomes is essential for Erimus Housing to track the impact of our approach to the aids and adaptations service. Monitoring of the implementation of this policy and the associated procedures will consider:

- How easily applicants can access the aids and adaptations service;
- The performance against service standards and targets set out in the procedures;
- The cost of providing the service;
- Customer satisfaction and level of complaints, reviews and appeals.

7.1.2 Monitoring information will be reported to the operations Committee on a quarterly basis and publicised to customers on a regular basis. Monitoring information needs to be formulated corporately.

7.2 Review

7.2.1 Monitoring results will be used by Erimus Housing to inform future policy review in this area. All reviews will consider whether:

- The current policy adheres to legislative and regulatory requirements, and reflects current good practice;
- The aims and objectives of the policy being met;
- The current policy outcomes meet the needs and aspirations of our diverse customer base;
- Service users are aware of and understand the policy and believe it to be consistent and fair;
- The policy provides sufficient choice for customers;
- The service offers value for money;
- Partnership arrangements are working effectively.

Overall monitoring and review of the policy will be undertaken in consultation with:

- Staff groups;
- Board members;
- Existing and future service users;
- Resident and community groups;
- Partners, local voluntary agencies and other statutory services as relevant.

7.2.2 This policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis or in line with legislative or regulatory changes.

8. RESPONSIBILITY

- 8.1 The Director of Director of Housing retains the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- 8.2 The service head is responsible for the operational delivery of this policy and the associated procedures. This includes responsibility for monitoring and review, staff awareness and training, policy development and communication to customers.