

Title of policy:	Aids and Adaptions Policy and Procedure
Version:	4
Updated:	July 2025
Next review:	July 2027
By:	Head of Property and Compliance

The Safety & Quality Standard set out by the Regulator of Social Housing specifies that Registered Providers must clearly communicate to tenants and relevant organisations how they will assist tenants seeking housing adaptations services and must co-operate with tenants, appropriate Local Authority departments and other relevant organisations so that a housing adaptations service is provided to tenants where appropriate.

This Policy & Procedure sets out how we will assist tenants seeking housing adaptations.

North Star is committed to doing everything we can to support tenants to live in their home safely.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Repairs & Maintenance Policy and Vulnerability Policy.

1.0 Policy

North Star facilitates the provision of a range of adaptations and equipment to assist tenants to remain independently in their own homes, within their existing communities.

This Policy provides a guide to customers and staff on how North Star manage adaptations requests from initial enquiries through to completion of works.

2.0 Objectives

The aim of our Aids and Adaptations Policy is to meet the needs of individuals living in North Star properties and who are struggling with mobility or sensory limitations that affect their ability to fully utilise and enjoy their home.

We can provide adaptations or signpost tenants to access a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) via the Local Authority. If an adaptation is not a viable solution in their present home, we would, in conjunction with the tenant, look at whether suitable alternative accommodation is available, to promote and maintain long term independence.

The policy has the following strategic objectives:

- To provide a service that supports our tenants and other permanent members of the household to live independently in their home.
- To ensure we allocate homes that are designed or adapted to meet specific needs appropriately.
- Ensure tenants and other permanent members of the household are aware of all the options open to them when accessing the aids and adaptations service.
- Provide a cost effective and accessible aids and adaptations service.

3.0 Funding & Finance

Whilst North Star does not have any statutory obligation to fund adaptations works we do hold an annual budget to provide both major and minor adaptations for our tenants. We also work with relevant Local Authorities to assist tenants in accessing Disabled Facility Grants (DFG).

The adaptations service is led by the Property Services Team within North Star.

All major adaptation requests will be initially passed to the individual Local Authority to process through the DFG process. North Star will monitor DFG waiting times for each individual application and, if necessary, intervene to fund adaptations through our own budget where appropriate and possible.

4.0 Qualifying Adaptations

We recognise that for someone to request assistance to help them continue to enjoy their own home can be a difficult decision and all requests will be treated sensitively.

North Star will give permission for adaptations where the long-term needs of the tenant can be met. We work with Occupational Therapist Teams to agree on the design and specification for each individual. If the current property is not suitable for adaptation we will work with the tenant to discuss options.

Tenants can request an adaptation by contacting North Star Customer Services Team (CST):

Phone: 03000 11 00 111

Email: adaptations@northstarhg.co.uk

The following details the nature of the different adaptations (minor & major) and outlines when adaptations can usually be provided.

4.1 Minor Adaptations

Minor adaptations such as a grab rail or banister rail etc can be logged as routine day to day works. If additional information is required, CST will contact the Property Services Team for further clarity. A surveyor from the team may visit and inspect and/or an Occupational Therapist assessment may be involved.

North Star works across 8 Local Authority Areas, most class a minor adaptation is one that has a value of less than £500, (Durham County Council less than £1000). Many items can be requested without an Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment.

Minor adaptation works might include:

- Banister rails
- Drop down rails
- Fitting of shower chairs (chair is supplied by OT)
- Grab rails
- Half steps
- Internal door thresholds
- Lever Taps

Anything above these limits would be referred to the Local Authority for consideration as a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) request.

4.2 Sensory Adaptations and Equipment (Provided by Cleveland Fire Brigade Fire on behalf of North Star)

Items listed below require an OT assessment or an assessment carried out by

Cleveland Fire Brigade at North Star request.

- Flashing doorbells /smoke detectors/CO detectors
- Vibrating pillows / bed mats
- Hearing loops

4.3 Major adaptations

Requests for major adaptations require careful co-ordinated involvement of several parties including Housing Officers, Property Services Surveyors and the input of an Occupational Therapist who will work with the individual to discuss what adaptations are most suitable.

North Star can only facilitate major adaptations when the request is accompanied by a referral from an Occupational Therapist, as North Star is a landlord and does not employ healthcare professionals.

Also, the property needs to be suitable to be adapted. Many modern homes tend to be designed for easier access and future adaptability but many older properties are not.

Where a DFG is required the tenant will be asked to contact the Local Authority to make the application as the application needs to be made by the individual and not the property owner.

The Local Authority (OT) will assess the person's individual needs and how the property might be altered.

The OT will communicate with North Star staff as well as the customer as the proposed works need to be approved by the landlord. A visit to the property may be required.

If the property is due for Planned Maintenance then North Star may be able to pull the date forward, enhance the specification and do all the work at the same time.

Once permission has been given by The Property Services Team, they will add a note to HMS Endeavour to say that approval has been granted and who to contact for queries to ensure clear communication is available to all before, during and after the works are carried out.

Note: It may be necessary to consider re-housing options in some circumstances where the property is not suitable for adaptation or where the person's needs cannot be adequately met, even with available adaptations.

Below is a list of the most frequently requested major adaptations and a guide to when we will provide these or permit the Local Authority to.

1. Level Access Shower (LAS) or Wet Rooms

A Level Access Shower or wet room conversion will be considered when the property is a:

- Ground floor flat/apartment or bungalow with level access entry point or easily ramped access
- House and no other accommodation will be adequate to meet the long-term needs of the individual or size of the household
- Upstairs flat/apartment only when other avenues have been explored such as rehousing

Note; because of future maintenance uncertainties an upstairs wet room will be carefully considered.

2. Over Bath Shower

An over bath shower can be installed:

- Unless the design of the bathroom is unsuitable in which case further discussion and consideration of options will take place.

3. Ramps

External ramps to the property will be considered when needed and:

- When surroundings allow a suitable gradient to be achieved
- When the installation of a ramp will not impede access to neighbouring properties nor remove in curtilage parking where it exists.

4. Stairlifts and Through Floor Lifts

A stairlift/through floor lift will be considered when the property is a:

- House, where a family environment exists, and no other accommodation will be adequate to meet the long term needs of the tenants.
- Flat/apartment in some circumstances

5. Door Entry System/Intercom

- Will be considered unless the design of the property will not allow

installation in which case further discussion and consideration will be taken.

6. Extension

- Extensions will be considered where the needs of the individual require and the design of the property allows for this. Other options will however be explored prior to approval due to the likely cost and the availability of funding. See Section 6.

5.0 Timescale for delivery of adaptations

North Star and its contractors will aim to meet the following performance targets in all adaptation requests.

5.1 Minor Adaptations

The target for completion of the work is no more than 30 days from the date of notification to the Contractor, to the day of the completion of the works (unless deemed more urgent).

5.2 Major Adaptations

The target for completion of the works that are funded by North Star is 45 days from the date of receipt OT referral to the day of the completion of the works (as long as this is suitable for the tenant). The timescale for completion of the works that are funded and carried out by a Local Authority is variable but will be monitored by North Star.

6.0 Reasons Major Adaptations may be refused

North Star are obliged to make the best use of stock and on occasion may not support a request for an adaptation where appropriate alternative accommodation has been identified, which may better suit the identified needs of the customer. These discussions will always be made sensitively with the needs of the customer at the forefront, however as a landlord, North Star has a duty to manage budgets and stock most effectively.

North Star reserves the right to refuse significant adaptations where:

- A reasonable alternative property is available or is likely to become available, in the near future

- When we feel the proposed works are inappropriate for the property concerned, and may devalue the asset
- The proposed adaptation may affect the ability to let this property in the future
- Where a tenant has been offered suitable alternative accommodation and has refused to move. Housing staff will inform the Property Services Team who will then speak to the OT who will decide what the next stages are (if any).

If there are any concerns about Health & Safety of the tenant remaining in situ, a joint visit with Housing Team & the OT may be required.

7. If a move is the agreed best option

In some cases, a move to a more suitable property may be the best solution. If the current property cannot be adapted, or if an adaptation is not practical due to the property's design or condition, we will work closely with the tenant to find an alternative home that better suits their needs.

If a move is required North Star will support the tenant throughout the process. Tenants will be asked to register on Choice Based Lettings and will be banded appropriately taking their medical needs into account. Tenants will be supported by an OT and can bid for homes as they become available.

8.0 Best use of stock

8.1 Void Properties

Housing Officers will make every effort to re-let any void properties with existing adaptations to tenants with a requirement for the use of the existing adaptation.

Where the removal of equipment-based adaptations including vertical lifts, stairlifts, hoists and steel deck ramps is necessary, the Housing Officer and Property Surveyors are required to check ownership of the lift by contacting Property Compliance Team, if the lift is owned by Local Authority then the Property Compliance administrator will arrange for removal. Early notification from the Housing Officer & Property Surveyor will minimise void delays.

Lifts must not be removed / disposed of without notification.

8.2 Occupied Properties

A request by the tenant can be made to remove an adaptation. If the request is made by the tenant who the adaptation was installed for, then the relevant Social Services department should be involved. North Star will liaise with Occupational Therapist Team on behalf of the tenant.

8.0 Record keeping

Consultation with various stakeholders including the tenant and Housing Officers are an important part of this process and notes/records should be made and kept appropriately on HMS Endeavour.

8.0 Monitoring and Review

North Star will monitor the effectiveness of the Policy & Procedure and may recommend changes to improve service delivery.

Data/insights will be captured via Tenant Satisfaction Surveys and property visits.

Key performance information in relation to this service will be included in the regular Property Services Team Dashboard and reported to the Board.

This Policy will be reviewed by the Policy Review Group which involves customers.

9.0 Appeals and Complaints

All appeals and complaints will follow the format of North Star Complaints which can be found here

Procedure.

Appendices

Appendix A - Minor adaptations process chart

Appendix B - Major adaptations process chart

Appendix C - Letter to tenant informing them of contractor appointment

Appendix D - Works Overview Form

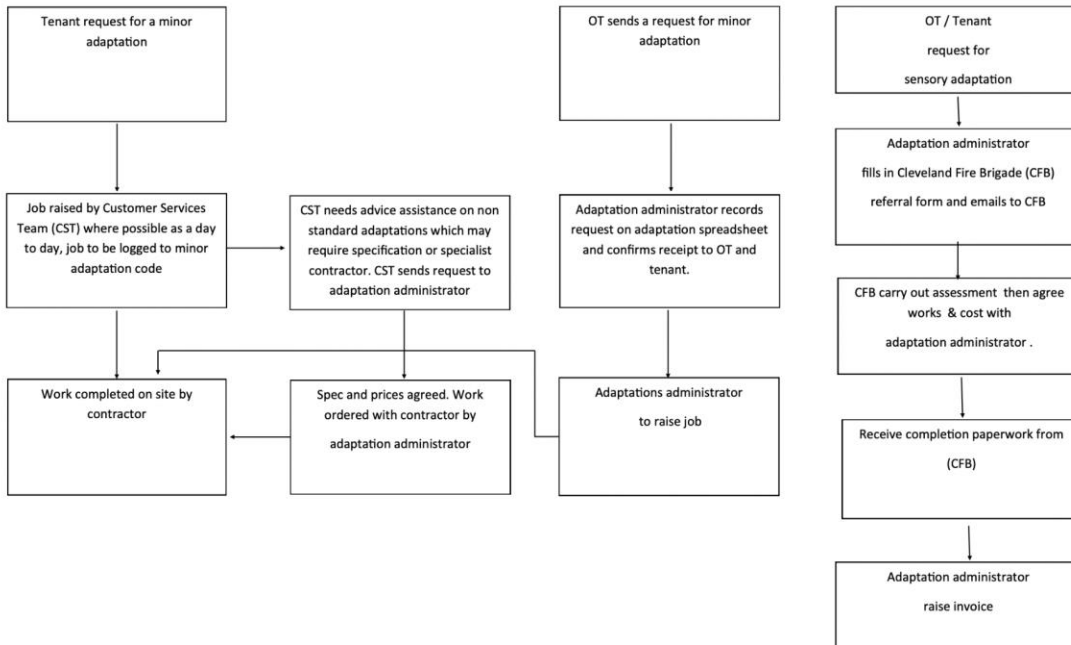
Appendix E - Work completion certificate

Appendix F - Tenant satisfaction survey

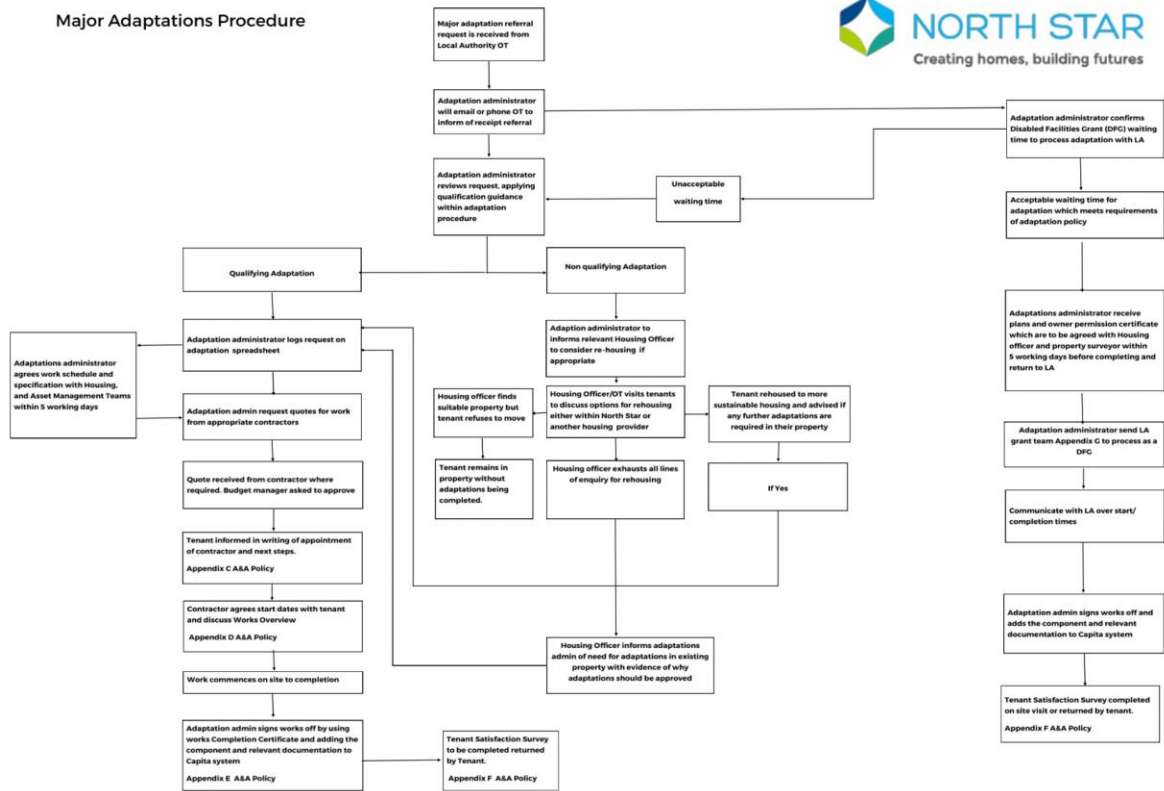
Appendix G - Permission letter for Local Authority to progress DFG

Appendix H - Local Authority Details

Minor Adaptations Procedure



Major Adaptations Procedure



Appendix C



North Star
Endeavour House,
St Mark's Court, Thornaby,
Stockton-on-tees, TS17 6QN
Email: customer.services@northstarhg.co.uk
Phone: 03000 11 00 11
Web: www.northstarhg.co.uk

Date

Client Name

Client Address

Dear Sir / Madam,

I can confirm we have received and logged your request for Level Access Shower. We would like to carry out a joint inspection with the contractor within the next 10 working days so we can finalise the works required for your adaptation. Once the visit has been carried out, we will request a quote and schedule of works from the contractor. Once the schedule of works and quote is accepted by North Star we will arrange for the works to be organised and carried out.

If you require any further information, please contact me via email at adaptations@northstarhg.co.uk or by phone on **03000 110011**

Yours sincerely

Appendix D



Adaptation Works Overview

Resident Name _____

Property Address _____

Adaptation _____

Contractor _____

Contractor Contact _____

North Star Contact _____

Time Scale _____

Day 1 _____

Day 2 _____

Day 3 _____

Day 4 _____

Day 5 _____

Extras Time if Required _____

Estimated Start Date _____

Additional Information _____

Date _____



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Appendix E

Adaptation Works Completion Form

Contract: Aids & Adaptation

For: North Star

Address: Endeavour House, St Marks Court, Thornaby
Stockton-on-Tees TS17 6QN

Contractor:

Property Location: _____

Description of Works: _____

Snagging Items:

Completion Date:

Inspection Date:

Signed (NS):

Print name:

Signed (Contractor):

Print name:



Appendix F

Adaptation Type: Contractor Job Address:	
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	YES ☺	NO ☹
Q1. Were you given adequate notice by North Star prior to the works ?		
Q2. Are you satisfied with the way the works carried out were booked, arranged and managed by your contractor		
Q3. Has the contractor communicated well and been helpful throughout the entire process?		
Q4. Was the attitude of all contractor's employees good and were they courteous, respectful and approachable?		
Q5. Were ID Badges shown when requested?		
Q6. Are you satisfied with the finished job?		
Q7. Did the contractor use adequate protection and work tidily including cleaning up?		
Q8. Are you satisfied with the specification of the materials used?		

TOTAL

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On a scale of 1-10; 1 being very poor ☹☹ and 10 being excellent ☺☺, please score the following questions.

Out of 10, how would you rate the overall service provided by contractor ?	
Out of 10, how would you rate the overall service provided by North Star with regard to this contract?	

Any other comments:.....

Signed:	Signed Contractor/North Star	Date
Customer		

Appendix G



North Star
Endeavour House,
St Mark's Court, Thornaby,
Stockton-on-tees, TS17 6QN
Email: customer.services@northstarhg.co.uk
Phone: 03000 11 00 11
Web: www.northstarhg.co.uk

Our Ref:
Date

Address

Dear Resident,

Aids and Adaptations: Residents Details

Thank you for your letter dated *****, regarding the adaptation of:

Level Access Shower

On behalf of North Star I can confirm we will not be funding the installation, however we are willing to provide permission for HBC to complete the works mentioned above.

I have attached a copy of the Electric Certificate and an asbestos survey. Can you ensure no works commence prior to your contractors receiving the enclosed documents. I would be grateful if you could advise me once this adaptation has been completed and send me the relevant documents to support the completion.

If you wish to discuss this matter with me further, please contact me on **03000 110011** or by email adaptations@northstarhg.co.uk

Yours sincerely,

