



# Equipment and Adaptations Policy and Procedure

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Please avoid referring to printed versions of this policy.

Printed versions may quickly go out of date –contact the Policy Team for support and advice.

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## Our Policy

### 1.0 Introduction and Scope

- 1.1 This document covers our policy and procedure on equipment and adaptations. The policy and procedures aim to provide clear direction to staff and others about expected behaviour in dealing with equipment and adaptations.
- 1.2 The purpose of the policy is, therefore, to ensure that requests for Equipment and Adaptations are handled in a consistent manner across the organisation.
- 1.3 The scope of this policy covers:

Gentoo Group	X
Gentoo Homes	
Gentoo Developments Ltd	
Gentoo Genie	

It applies to:

General Needs rented properties	X
Supported Housing	X
Sheltered Housing	X
Leasehold/Shared ownership	
Rent to Buy properties	
Market rented properties (domestic)	
Temporary Accommodation	
Stock owned but not managed by the Group	X
Communal Areas, including those relating to Leasehold/Shared Ownership properties	X
Commercial Property (offices, depots etc)	
Stock managed by Gentoo on behalf of a third party	
Garages and outbuildings	
Remote plant (district heating, electrical pumps etc)	
Curtilage	

## **2.0 Links to organisations goals**

2.1 Our Vision and Values set the direction and culture of the Group. They ensure that the business is aligned around the desire to create sustainable homes and communities and to improve the lives of our customers. The Vision and Values ensure that all of our people understand Gentoo's ethos and are clear about what is expected of them and the contribution they can make.

### **Vision:**

Great Homes - Strong Communities - Inspired People

### **Values:**

Do the right thing

Make a difference

Work together

Keep learning

Give all you've got

## **3.0 Regulation and Legislation**

3.1 The Executive Director (Operations) will ensure this policy has regard to all legislation, regulation and best practice. The regulation and legislation applicable to this policy is attached in Appendix 3.

## **4.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

4.1 As a Housing Association, we have a statutory responsibility to comply with all relevant regulation and legislation in relation to providing equipment and adaptations in our properties.

4.2 The Executive Director (Operations) is accountable for ensuring this policy has regard to all legislation, regulation and best practice and for ensuring implementation of this policy effectively.

4.3 The Director (Customer) is accountable for adequate resourcing and having effective processes in place to implement the policy.

4.4 The Executive Director of Property has responsibility for the budget for major adaptations.

4.5 The Head of Service (Operations) is responsible for the day to day delivery of this policy but more specifically, the Older Persons Support Manager is the operational lead.

## **5.0 Monitoring and Review**

5.1 This policy will be reviewed every 4 years or in line with business need.

5.2 This policy may be subject to an audit in line with the internal audit plan.

5.3 The procedure will be regularly reviewed and updated where appropriate.

## **6.0 Our Policy Statement**

6.1 Providing equipment and adaptations can improve an individual's dignity, privacy, independence, health and feelings of social inclusion, safety and security. It can also assist with a family carer's physical and mental strain, giving more freedom and peace of mind.

6.2 We will enable our customers to live in their homes independently by providing them with equipment and adaptations where appropriate. However, if this is not possible, we will support them to find a property that will be more suited to their needs.

6.3 Gentoo will work closely with the Occupational Therapy service to ensure that our customers are provided with the right level of support for their needs.

6.4 This policy fully complies with the Group's Data Protection Policy.

## **7.0 Policy Outcomes**

### **7.1 Our policy aims to achieve the following outcomes:**

- Staff and customers will be provided with clear direction to ensure an effective, consistent and transparent service is being delivered that meets the needs of our customers.
- To ensure that Gentoo is committed to the development of good practice and sound procedures whilst ensuring value for money is achieved.

- To ensure that Gentoo works closely with the Local Authority to reduce the financial impact on the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and minor adaptations budget which will assist in meeting an individual's needs as appropriate.
- To increase our customers knowledge of the availability of equipment and adaptations.
- To support the customer throughout the process of major/minor adaptations being carried out.
- To ensure customers can live independently and with dignity.
- To increase customers feelings of safety and security.
- To ensure that customers can remain in a home of their choice for as long as possible.

## **8.0 Records**

8.1 All records and documents relating to equipment and adaptations are kept in:

- S Drive on the network in the Adapted and Disabled Properties folder.
- Asset Management systems (Apex, ProMaster).

# **Our Procedure**

## 1.0 Introduction – Types of Adaptation work

- 1.1 Equipment and Adaptations include a wide range of works which are needed to help a disabled person remain living independently in their home. Adaptations are carried out to provide improved access into and out of the property and to help with access to facilities within the home.
- 1.2 Equipment is provided by Sunderland City Council's Community Equipment Service (CES). The service provides equipment on loan to people who are ill or have a disability. Equipment is offered following an assessment of need which will be carried out by an Adult Services or Health Service professional.
- 1.3 The equipment provided could enable people to remain in their own homes as an alternative to admission to hospital or to a care home. The type of equipment can vary from a simple grab rail to assist with stability or more complex equipment to aid with bathing or individual health needs.
- 1.4 Where people feel they are in need of equipment they should be signposted direct to CES unless there are other support needs, in this case a referral can be made to the Safety and Support Team. Referrals to CES for specific equipment can be made by the Safety and Support Team but only where they are already involved for other support issues. Further details can be found at:

<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1170>

## 2.0 Minor Adaptations

- 2.1 Minor adaptations include providing and fitting hand or grab rails, and replacing ordinary taps to sinks, wash hand basins and baths with lever taps.
- 2.2 It is Gentoo's policy to provide and fit the following minor adaptations to our properties, some of which are subject to assessment:

1. Rails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Main entrance support rails</li><li>• Grab-rails</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newel rails</li> <li>• Hand-rails</li> <li>• Stair hand-rails</li> </ul>
2. Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widened pathway to main entrance</li> <li>• Concrete steps</li> <li>• Lowering door thresh</li> </ul>
3. Kitchens & bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kitchen lever taps</li> <li>• Bathroom lever taps</li> <li>• W.C lever flush handles</li> <li>• Bathroom grab-rails</li> <li>• Repairs to walk-in showers</li> </ul>
4. General Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alter heights of electric faceplates</li> <li>• Rehang doors</li> </ul>
5. Safety Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety glass (full length windows, If in a door, door will need to be replaced)</li> </ul>

- 2.3 The Wellbeing team will visit the customer once they receive a referral and they will assess whether the customer would benefit from equipment and/or adaptations and will make recommendations based on their assessment – See Appendix 1 (minor adaptations).
- 2.4 If a customer requires an adaptation, the Support Coordinator will email the dedicated R&M inbox using the proforma to request the adaptation.
- 2.5 If the customer requires equipment, a referral will be made to the Occupational Therapy service – See Appendix 1 (major adaptations).

### **3.0 Major Adaptations**

- 3.1 It is Gentoo's policy to contribute towards the funding of major adaptations for tenants of Gentoo in conjunction with the Local Authority in line with their criteria and agreed budget. Referrals for all major adaptations are made via the Safety and Support Team and the Wellbeing Team to the Local Authority OT Service for a full assessment

of need. They will then refer on to the HIA for an assessment to carry out the works.

Major adaptations include:

1. Fixed Mechanical Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Straight track stair lifts</li> <li>• Curved track stair lifts</li> <li>• Ceiling track hoists</li> <li>• Through floor vertical lifts</li> <li>• Bath hoist</li> </ul>
2. Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widened doorways</li> <li>• Permanent ramp</li> <li>• Access to gardens</li> </ul>
3. Kitchens & bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low level or level access shower</li> <li>• Over bath shower</li> <li>• Automatic WC</li> <li>• Lowering or rearranging kitchen units</li> </ul>
4. Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heating alterations</li> <li>• Electrical alterations</li> <li>• Extensions - Ground floor bedroom/bathroom/Porch etc</li> <li>• Other internal alterations</li> <li>• Other items as required over £1,000</li> </ul>

3.2 Gentoo have a specific budget to contribute towards providing major adaptations. The budget holder is the Executive Director of Property. Gentoo will reimburse the Local Authority for a percentage of the cost of adaptations fitted to a Gentoo property depending on the annual budget. Reimbursement will be on a monthly basis upon receipt of an invoice and a report detailing the adaptations carried out and the property addresses. Once this budget has been exhausted it is then the responsibility of the Local Authority to fund any further adaptations for the remainder of the financial year.

- 3.3 Records of all adaptations will be recorded on the Housing Management ICT systems.
- 3.4 Where the required adaptation to a Gentoo property exceeds the maximum DFG limit of £30,000, consideration will be given to underwriting the extra costs on a case by case basis subject to budget constraints. This decision will be made by the Executive Director (Operations).
- 3.5 There will be no charge to tenants for the minor adaptations fitted by Gentoo, as recommended following a full assessment.
- 3.6 Major adaptations will be installed by the HIA following a full assessment by the OT Service. There will only be a charge to the tenant if the test of resources carried out by the HIA dictates that a contribution is required for the adaptations to go ahead.
- 3.7 On the expiry of the warranty for FME installed by the Local Authority, Gentoo will maintain and repair the equipment.
- 3.8 The rent on the property will only be increased if the work results in property enhancements in line with the company's rent setting criteria i.e. the number of rooms increased in the home or a car park or garage is provided (see – rent setting policy and procedure).

#### **4.0 When we will not carry out the work**

- 4.1 In certain circumstances we may decide that it is reasonable and practical to ask the customer and their family to move to more suitable property and as such we will not carry out the adaptations requested or give permission for the Local Authority to carry out the works. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to:
  - When the customer occupies a property that is scheduled for a modernisation or major refurbishment within the next 12 months
  - Where the customer is actively seeking rehousing (this applies to major adaptations only)
  - Where a property is under occupied and extensive adaptations are requested (case by case basis)

- Where a customer who has a pre-existing condition dictates they need an adaptation, and they choose to accept a property which is unsuitable
  - Where provision is requested for use of a motorised scooter (see mobility scooter procedure)
  - Where a property is subject to a preserved Right to Buy or Right to Acquire application
  - Where we have an alternative suitable property available that already has the adaptations needed in place.
- 4.2 These customers may still be able to apply directly to their Local Authority for assistance with equipment and adaptations.
- 4.3 Tenants can apply for an adaptation if they are finding it difficult to access their home, to move around their home or to use the bathroom and kitchen in particular.
- 4.4 If an adaptation is to be refused, the Support Coordinator will visit the customer to explain in person the reasons why the request has been refused. They may also involve the customer in discussions about their housing options going forward (see Allocations policy).

## **5.0 Recycling**

- 5.1 In order to maximise the use of resources and provide an excellent service to our customers, we will where reasonably possible in the lettings process match adapted properties to residents whose needs require adaptations.
- 5.2 All minor and major adaptations will be recorded on our property attributes database and the information will be used when allocating properties.
- 5.3 Where there isn't an adapted property available which suits the customer's needs, we will take reasonable steps to allocate them a property which will be suitable to adapt, this may involve an OT assessment.
- 5.4 Where equipment is no longer needed and can be utilised by another customer it will be recycled, in one of the following ways:

- All FME that is provided through a DFG by the Local Authority is subject to a five year grant condition period, this condition ensures that if a piece of equipment is no longer needed in the property for the person for whom it was installed then the Local Authority can remove and recycle this equipment. If this situation occurs and there is someone else in the household or a new tenant who may need this equipment then the HIA should be informed and arrangements will be made for an OT assessment to be carried out. If this assessment confirms that this equipment is needed and is suitable then the Local Authority will not remove the equipment under the grant condition. If the equipment is to be removed within the grant condition period then this will be arranged by the HIA and the original supplier will be used to remove, store and recycle.

## **6.0 Landlord Permission**

- 6.1 Where the Local Authority has agreed to fund major adaptations within their criteria through the DFG, permission must be requested from Gentoo before works can be carried out. Permission will be granted wherever possible within 14 days of receiving the request (see Major Adaptations process in section 3).
- 6.2 Permission should only be granted outside 14 days where a property inspection is required to ensure that it is suitable for the adaptation to be carried out.
- 6.3 With the tenant's authority the HIA will also request confirmation that the tenant is not registered for rehousing with Gentoo.
- 6.4 If the customer is registered for re-housing and has been given a priority banding, the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator will visit and establish whether the customer still wishes to move, or if they wish to remain and for the works to be completed.

## **7.0 Right to Improve**

- 7.1 Tenants may in accordance with their tenancy agreement request consent to carry out adaptation work at their own cost. Tenants should seek permission from Gentoo before carrying out any works (see: Tenancy Management Toolkit).

## **8.0 Post-work Inspections**

- 8.1 Gentoo will inspect 10% of both major and minor adaptations undertaken by external contractors on a quarterly basis.

## **9.0 Learning and Development**

- 9.1 We will ensure that all relevant Board and Committee members and staff receive training and guidance in respect of our Equipment and Adaptations Policy.
- 9.2 Staff directly undertaking the assessments for Equipment and Minor Adaptations will be trained to various levels by the Local Authority to be Trusted Assessor's; therefore ensuring they have the knowledge and expertise to undertake appropriate assessments and make necessary recommendations for staff to undertake the relevant adaptation work. Some Occupational Therapy assessments will be required for works that fall outside the remit of the Trusted Assessor.

## **10.0 Monitoring and Review**

- 10.1 This policy and our approach enable us to be transparent in delivering this service. Customers who have used the adaptations service will be given the opportunity to feed back on the service they have received. This feedback will be used to influence decisions, change and setting of targets and service standards.
- 10.2 The Equipment and Adaptations Policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier in response to changes in legal and regulatory requirements and to ensure it reflects best practice or service demands.

- 10.3 The budget for major and minor adaptations will be reviewed on an annual basis. The performance against the budget will be reported to Gentoo Board on a regular basis.
- 10.4 All Adaptations, either installed by Gentoo or the Local Authority, will be recorded on the housing management ICT system; the system will also be updated when an adaptation has been removed.

## **11.0 Appeals**

- 11.1 Any appeals or complaints received relating to this policy will be dealt with under the Company's Complaints policy and procedure.

## **12.0 Customer Satisfaction**

- 12.1 Customer satisfaction surveys will be carried out in line with the Repairs and Maintenance customer satisfaction procedure.
- 12.2 This information will be collated by the Customer and Community Team and reported to Repairs and Maintenance Management on a regular basis.

## **13.0 Regulatory Requirements**

- 13.1 This policy complies with the Regulator of Social Housing Regulatory Framework.
- 13.2 In addition, this policy complies with all relevant legislation and is in line with the Group's policies as listed below:
- Diversity & Inclusion Policy
  - Allocations Policy
  - Child and Adult Safeguarding Policies
  - Complaints Policy and procedure

## **14.0 Equality and Diversity**

14.1 We are committed to the principles of equality and diversity throughout the organisation and aim to:

- Meet the needs and choice of people from all backgrounds
- Ensure that our services are relevant, responsive and sensitive to the needs of our existing and future customers
- Ensure that all sections of the community in which we works have equal access to our services

14.2 An Equality Assessment has been completed for this policy in conjunction with the Diversity and Inclusion Team.

## **15.0 Service Standards**

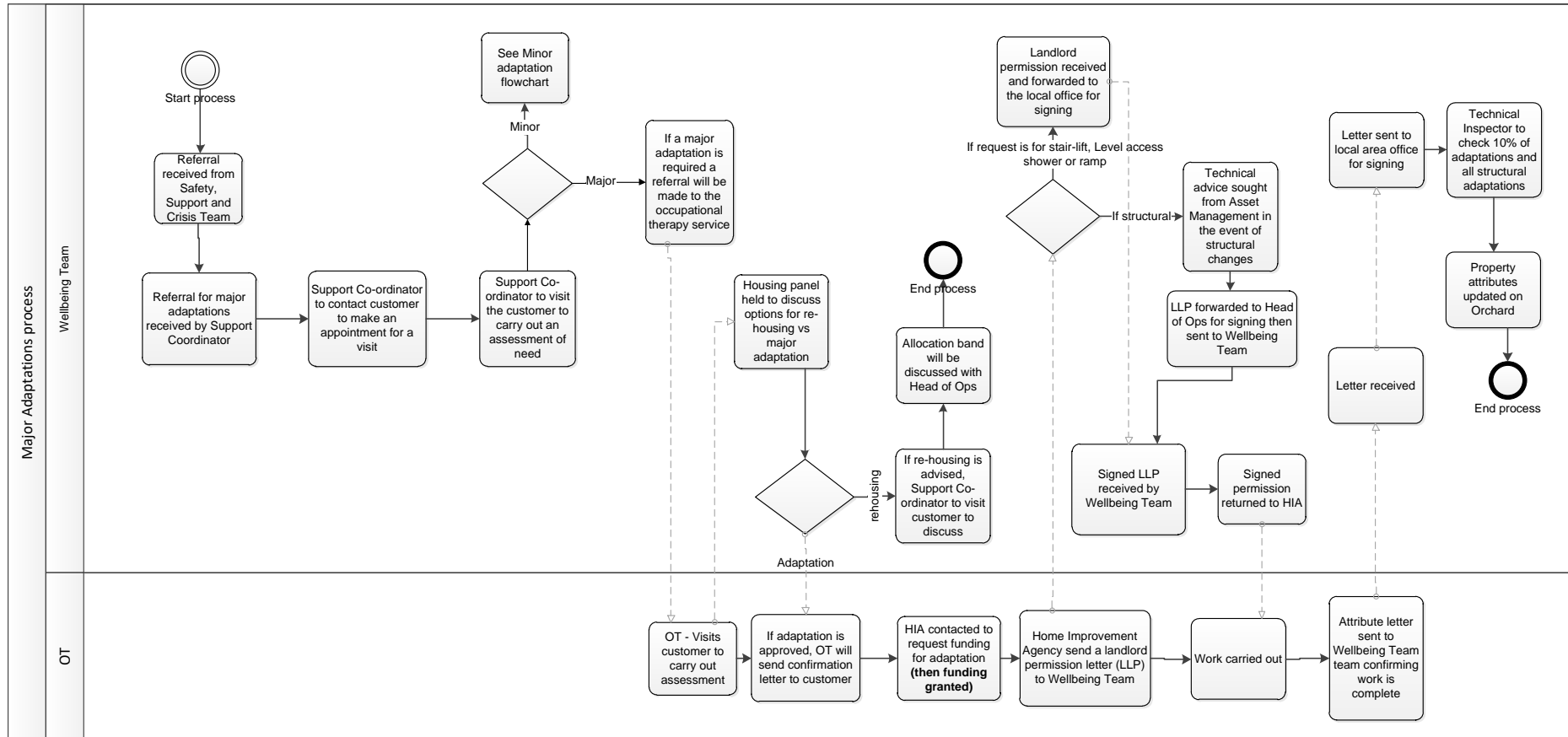
15.1 Gentoo will meet the following service standards:

- For minor adaptations, where an inspection is required, we will visit and carry out an assessment within 5 working days
- For urgent minor adaptations, work will be carried out within 24 hours of the request being raised
- Minor adaptations works will be carried out in a timeframe that is mutually convenient for both the customer and Gentoo in line with the timescales set out in our Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- For major adaptations we will contact tenants to undertake the appropriate assessment and refer to the Occupational Therapy (OT) service within 10 working days
- Grant permission to the Local Authority for works to be carried out within 14 days of the request being received unless an inspection is required

15.2 All timescales will be explained to the customer if they are to exceed the service standard.



# Appendix 1 – New adaptations requests - major



## **New Adaptations Requests - Major**

- 1.1 Gentoo tenants or their representative can make a referral to any member of Gentoo staff. The staff member will complete a Safety and Support assessment referral form and email it to the Safety and Support Team within Gentoo Operations at [safetyandsupport@gentoo.com](mailto:safetyandsupport@gentoo.com) and this will be logged as an initial referral. The referral will be sent to the Wellbeing Team for action.
- 1.2 The relevant Support Co-ordinator will then contact the tenant to arrange to carry out an assessment of need and to complete a referral for the Occupational Therapy (OT) Service.
- 1.3 The OT will then arrange to visit and assess the tenant / property.
- 1.4 Following the assessment, the OT will discuss any complex adaptation recommendations e.g. extensions, vertical lifts at the most convenient Housing Panel Meeting. The representatives of which are from Gentoo, The Home Improvement Agency and OT Services.
- 1.5 If permission for the adaptation is granted the OT will refer the customer to the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) for grant funding, making recommendations to meet the customer's needs.
- 1.6 The HIA will send a Landlord Permission request to the Wellbeing Team within Gentoo Operations.
- 1.7 If the request is not for a structural adaptation permission for the adaptations work to be carried out will be sought from the appropriate Neighbourhood Operations Manager. A response will be sent to the HIA within 14 days of the request being received, unless an inspection is required.

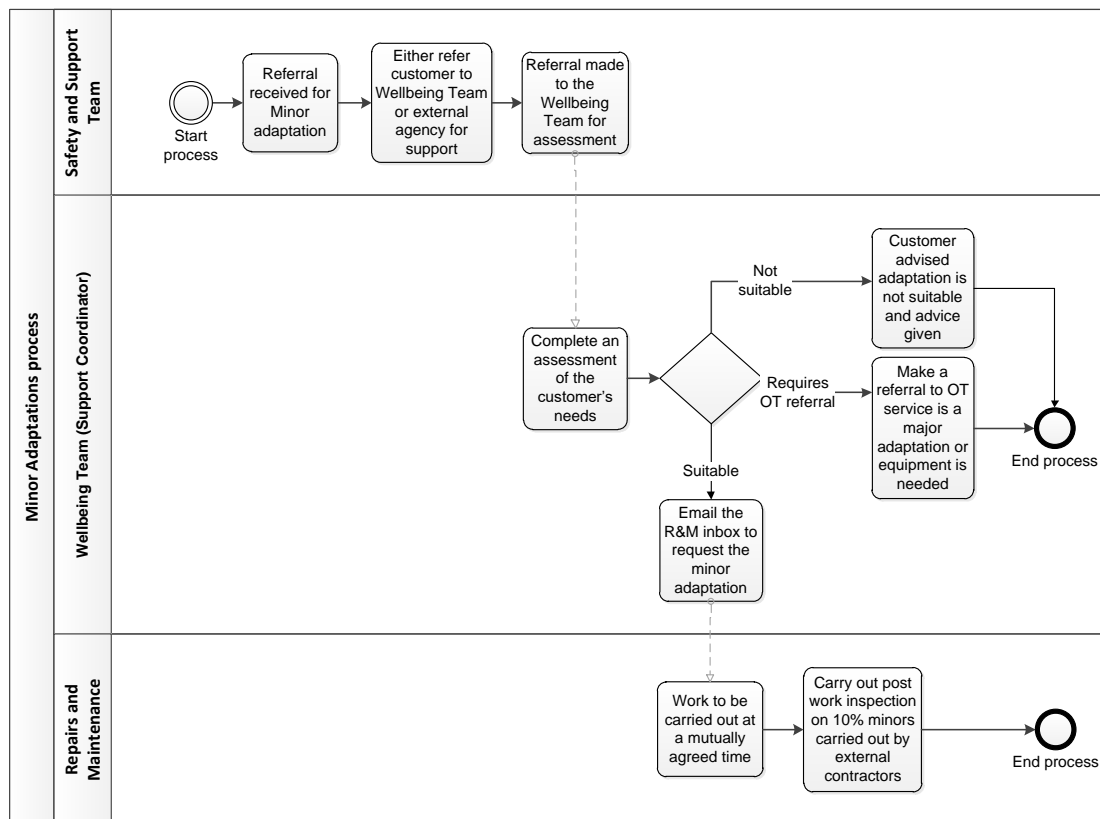
- 1.8 If the request is for a structural adaptation e.g. extension, advice will be sought from Asset Management. Proposed plans will be considered and Asset Management will assess permission based upon their technical expertise. This will include a list of Health and Safety requirements that the HIA must adhere to. Further permission for the adaptations work to be carried out will be sought from the appropriate Head of Operations. A response will be sent to the HIA within 14 days of the request being received, unless an inspection is required.
- 1.9 Where work is approved, The Wellbeing Team are notified when works have been completed. The team will add this information to the Orchard property attributes, and forward the notification to the appropriate Neighbourhood Operations Manager and Asset Management.
- 1.10 Orchard and APEX will be updated at each stage of the process to ensure monitoring of service standard timescales and up to date asset management information.
- 1.11 10% of the adaptations completed will be checked by the relevant Technical Inspector. The Wellbeing Team will monitor the work requiring an inspection and ensure that correct information is passed to the Technical Inspector. All structural alterations will be inspected.

## **2. Irreparable Fixed Mechanical Equipment**

- 2.1 Where the Centralised Maintenance Team identifies a piece of FME which is in need of being replaced through the maintenance programme, details of the tenant, the address, fault and the expected lifespan of the equipment will be emailed to [safetyandsupport@gentogroup.com](mailto:safetyandsupport@gentogroup.com) This will then be sent to the Wellbeing Team for action.
- 2.2 The Project Assistant within the Wellbeing Team will then contact the tenant to complete a referral for the Occupational Therapy (OT) Service via the telephone.

- 2.3 The OT will then arrange to visit and assess the tenant and refer them to the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) as necessary.
- 2.4 The HIA will send a Landlord Permission request to the Wellbeing Team within Gentoo Operations.
- 2.5 Permission for the adaptations work to be carried out will be sought from the appropriate Neighbourhood Operations Manager. A response will be sent to the HIA within 14 days.
- 2.6 The Wellbeing Team is then notified when works have been completed, who will then add this information to the Orchard property attributes and forward the notification to the appropriate Neighbourhood Operations Manager.
- 2.7 Orchard and APEX will be updated at each stage of the process to ensure monitoring of service standard timescales and up to date asset management information.
- 2.8 10% of the adaptations completed will be checked by the relevant Technical Inspector. The Wellbeing Team will monitor the work requiring an inspection and ensure that correct information is passed to the Technical Inspector.

## Appendix 2 - Minor Adaptations



- 1.0 Gentoo tenants or their representative can make a request for minor adaptations to any member of Gentoo staff
- 1.1 The request for a minor adaptation will be sent to the Safety and Support Team via a referral form. The team will assess the request and either signpost to the relevant agency or refer to the Wellbeing Team if they deem it necessary
- 1.2 Once the Wellbeing Team receive the referral, they will either ring the customer to find out more about their needs and to determine whether a visit from the Support Coordinator is needed
- 1.3 If a visit is needed, the Support Coordinator will visit the customer's home and determine whether a minor adaptation will help the customer to live independently or whether equipment or a major adaptation is needed. If this is the case, the customer will be referred to the Occupational Therapy (OT) service at Sunderland Council.
- 1.4 All minor adaptations will be carried out within a mutually agreed timeframe agreed by the customer and Gentoo.

- 1.5 If the adaptation is urgent, the job will be put onto a 24 hour vulnerability ticket.
- 1.6 A post work assessment will be undertaken on 10% of minor adaptations carried out by external contractors
- 1.7 ICT systems will be updated at each stage of the process. Once the adaptation has been completed, R&M staff will update the property attributes on Orchard to record the minor adaptation.

## **Appendix 3 - Regulation and Legislation**

Equality Act 2010;

CIH How to make effective use of adapted properties;

Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 as amended by the  
Regulatory Reform Order 2002;

RSH Home Standard

## Version Control

Version	Reason	Issuer	Date
2.0	Amended format	Sarah Treadwell	26/3/18
2.1	Amended names to job titles and added accountable Exec Director	Sarah Treadwell	13/5/19
2.2	Amended review period from 4 years to 3 years	Sarah Treadwell	02/9/19