



Equipment and Adaptations Policy

(Approved by Board 08th September 2009)

Equipment and Adaptations Policy

1. Background

- 1.1 Southway Housing Trust as a provider of housing services aims to ensure that all its residents are treated fairly, and have equal access to adaptations to assist them to remain living in their home. In order to meet the needs of our customers in leading more fulfilling lives, and playing an active part in their community, it is crucial that an effective equipment and adaptations service is provided.
- 1.2 Any tenant can apply for an adaptation if they have a longstanding illness, disability or infirmity which limits their daily activities, and they find it difficult to move around the home, including use of bathroom and kitchen. The primary purpose of an adaptation to a home is to enable or restore independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity through modification of a tenant's physical environment.
- 1.3 Southway Housing Trust aims to:
- Reconcile the expectations of our customers in need of equipment and adaptations with Southway's need to manage its stock effectively
 - Promote good practice and partnership working in relation to the service
 - Promote a consistent approach to the assessment and provision of equipment and adaptations
 - Prioritise applications to ensure that funding is allocated to residents in the greatest need
 - Provide adaptations within realistic and acceptable timescales from initial contact to completion of works
 - Ensure appropriate maintenance procedures are in place for adaptations after their defects liability period is finished, in particular for stair lifts, door entry systems and closimats
 - Ensure there is a procedure for recycling of adaptations in voids and exchanges
 - Offer tenants a range of choices in line with those offered through the Home Improvement Programme
 - Ensure that accurate and up to date records are maintained of customers' needs and adaptations on the IT systems for future lettings, repairs and improvement work
 - All tenants to be issued with the name and contact details of a key worker who will provide information and deal with any difficulties
 - Set performance targets and standards in the form of KPIs for satisfaction on major adaptations

- Provide an annual budget to meet demand for the service based on customer profiles and demographic projections
- Record adaptations and requests to influence future investment decisions and the Asset Management Strategy

2. Scope and Application

- 2.1 This policy applies to all tenants who require adaptations, alterations and enhancements to their home as a result of illness or disability. The adaptations or alterations may be required either for the tenant themselves, or a family member permanently residing at the property.
- 2.2 Leaseholders are not covered by this policy. Guidance and support will be offered to leaseholders in how to contact Manchester Equipment and Adaptations Partnership. Where a Leaseholder applies for an adaptation in a communal area, Southway Housing Trust will treat the request the same as that received from a tenant.

3. Minor Adaptations

- 3.1 All minor adaptations and community care equipment that costs less than £1,000 will be funded and delivered by the Local Authority via MEAP (subject to an assessment of need and eligibility) in line with their responsibility under the Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc) Act (Qualifying Services) (England) Regulations 2003 part 2.
- 3.2 Minor adaptations would include –
- a. Handrails/grab rails to the bathroom, toilet or external doors
 - b. Walkway handrails alongside paths or steps
 - c. Drop down rails
 - d. Fitting of lever taps (Southway Housing Trust already fitted)
 - e. Level access to washing lines
 - f. Height adjustable washing lines
 - g. Simple ramps
 - h. Raising of up to 5 electric sockets
 - i. Doorstep threshold works
 - j. Doorbells, smoke alarms for hearing / sight impaired tenants
 - k. Door widening for wheelchair access
 - l. Door opening reversal
 - m. Door handle adaptation – knobs to lever for example

4 Major Adaptations

- 4.1 As a major adaptation involves permanent changes to the structure of a person's home, an assessment by an occupation therapist will be completed by MEAP.

Major adaptations include:

- widening doors for wheelchair access / door entry systems
- installation of a through floor lift
- stair lifts
- an extension being built
- external access ramps
- kitchen/bathroom alterations/adaptations
- ceiling track hoists.
- access to gardens (ramps, level access, etc.)

Whilst carrying out bathroom or kitchen adaptation work, full refurbishment works will be undertaken in line with the specification used on the Home Improvement Programme. The full range of tenant choices will also be offered.

Where there is sufficient space within the bathroom being adapted, to fit a bath as well as a walk in shower then the bath will be provided. This will improve the facilities available for families where there is an adaptation required and improve the future lettable of the property.

- 4.2 Southway Housing Trust will contribute 40% to the cost of DFG funded work, with MEAP providing the remaining 60% through a DFG grant claim. (For works not already funded by Southway's HIP, the 40% funding rate will be tapered in with a 20% contribution in 2009/10, 30% in 2010/11 and 40% in 2011/2012).
- 4.3 If the cost of the adaptation is above £30,000 – the maximum DFG grant amount, Southway Housing Trust will consider funding the balance if no other accommodation is available, or assist in obtaining discretionary assistance from a grant, loan or equity release, as per the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. RSL's can also use other sources of funding such as grants payable under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 or funding from Charities to meet any shortfall.
- 4.4 Southway Housing Trust will not contribute to an adaptation when a means test has been undertaken by MEAP and the tenant asked to personally contribute to the adaptation.
- 4.5 Once adaptations are installed it will be the responsibility of Southway Housing Trust to carry out annual servicing (for example stair lifts) and any maintenance or replacement work required.

5 Property Use and Lettings

- 5.1 Southway Housing Trust is committed to letting its properties in line with stated policies and agreements. Wherever possible, properties with adaptations will be prioritised for households with a need for those adaptations. This commitment is detailed within the Lettings Policy.
- 5.2 Southway Housing Trust will also endeavour to make best use of existing adapted properties by suggesting a transfer to an adapted property that contains the adaptation required by another tenant. Southway Housing Trust will work

closely with MEAP to match empty properties with residents who require the facilities of that particular property.

- 5.3 Southway Housing Trust, on occasion, will offer transfer or rehousing to a disabled tenant, rather than adapting the existing home. However, no tenant will be forced to move against their wishes.
- 5.4 Southway Housing Trust will provide support and assistance to residents who are eligible for adaptations to enable them to move into properties that have already been adapted or are more suited to an adaptation where:
- The existing property is structurally unsuitable for the adaptation required
 - Excessive nuisance will be caused to occupants of neighbouring properties in the provision of the necessary adaptation
- 5.5 When Southway Housing Trust re-let a previously adapted property to tenant that has no need for such (for example, a walk in shower, that is not required), this will be removed and a bath and shower will be fitted, subject to consultation with the prospective tenant.

6 Repairs and Maintenance of Adaptations

- 6.1 Southway Housing Trust is responsible for the repair, maintenance and replacement of adaptations supplied and, following any guarantee and defects period, this includes stair lifts and showers.
- 6.2 Repairs to adaptations that affect the tenant's ability to live independently should be treated as urgent.
- 6.3 Disabled and/or Older Residents may have some minor repairs carried out for them that include:
- i. Replacement of sink/bath plugs and chains
 - ii. Clothes posts
 - iii. Broken or missing edging on a kitchen unit
 - iv. Broken or missing smoke detector
- 6.4 Repairs to these will be carried out under normal timescales as defined in the Responsive Repairs policy.

7 Prioritisation of Adaptations

Where there are budget constraints on providing all major adaptations required under this policy, Southway Housing Trust will work with MEAP to prioritise adaptations based on need through the following prioritisation:

Priority 1

- The resident is unable to carry out essential daily activities with or without a carer. For example, using the toilet, where the resident cannot manage independently and the carer is struggling to cope and/or is at risk of injury.

- Non-provision of service will result in reception into care or prevent discharge from hospital e.g. fitting rails around a toilet where the resident was admitted to hospital following a fall.

Priority 2

- The resident has difficulty in carrying out essential daily activities and has no regular support. For example the resident lives alone and has difficulty getting in or out of bed alone.

Priority 3

- The resident has difficulty in carrying out essential daily activities but has appropriate acceptable support to assist them with these difficulties. The resident's quality of life and level of independence would be improved.

Requests for adaptation work will be managed using the above priorities, and then in date order subject to the constraints of the forecast outcome against the budget for Equipment and Adaptations.

8 Recycling

- 8.1 If equipment is no longer needed and can be of help to someone else, it will be recycled, for example stair lifts.

9 Right to Improve

- 9.1 Tenants have the right to put in their own adaptations such as a shower or stair lift. However, those improvements, adaptations, alterations or additions to their home must be completed with the permission of Southway Housing Trust prior to the work starting. In addition, all necessary approvals such as planning and building regulations must also be obtained. Southway Housing Trust will not refuse permission unless there is a good reason.

10 Statutory and Legislative Framework

- 10.1 The following Acts and Orders must be adhered to, and this policy is consistent with the following:
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005
 - Delivering Housing Adaptations for Disabled People Nov 2004 (ODPM)
 - Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002
 - Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
 - Human Rights Act 1996

11 Equality and Diversity

- 11.1 This policy is intended to operate within the joint commitment to equalities and diversity including, equal treatment regardless of race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, with reasonable adjustments made where necessary in line with the DDA.

11.2 Any literature that is required relating to this policy will be made available in the format required by our tenants.

12 Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

12.1 The following KPI's are proposed to be reported and monitored on a quarterly basis:

- Customer satisfaction with the adaptation, the service, and the contractor carrying out the works.
- Average overall waiting time from request to major adaptation completion
- % of major adaptations completed within 3 months from the initial request
- Number of adaptation requests received
- Number of adaptation requests completed
- Number of adaptation requests refused
- Percentage of minor adaptations completed within 7 working days (national KPI with a target of 95%)

12.2 The performance of contractors and of MEAP will be monitored and managed. The services received will be benchmarked against that received by other RSLs.

13 Policy Implementation

13.1 The Director of Regeneration and Asset Management will have responsibility for ensuring that the policy is implemented and that training and briefing sessions are carried out to ensure implementation is successful.

13.2 The policy will be reviewed within 12 months, or earlier if changes in legislation, funding from MEAP or changes in practices are required.

14 Links to other Policies/Procedures and Strategies

- Customer Care
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity
- Right to Repair
- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Out of Hours Emergency Repairs
- Void Management Policy
- Lettings Policy
- Equipment and Adaptations Procedure

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW HISTORY

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Review Date:

Amendment(s) Made/Reason

Date Approved by Board:

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Next Projected Date of Review: September 2010