

Aids and Adaptations
Policy

Approved: HOC OCT 2024
Review: HOC OCT 2027

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Aids and adaptations policy

Sutton Housing Society (SHS) is committed to enabling happy lives and to making a difference to our residents by supporting them to live independently for as long as possible and to make the best use of the facilities within their home.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Sutton Housing Society (SHS) recognises the diverse needs of our residents and their family members who have disabilities.
- 1.2 We work closely with the local authority, health professionals and other relevant agencies to ensure there is a coordinated approach towards the aids and adaptations service and to ensure the best use of resources.
- 1.3 We will ensure that any major adaptation requests are subject to a full assessment of the individual needs and requirements; we will support them to access these specialist assessments.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all SHS properties including our general needs homes, our extra care homes at Cloverdale Court and our housing for older people.
- 1.5 SHS will fund minor adaptations up to the value of £1,000. For all adaptations exceeding £1,000, we will seek to maximise the funding of adaptations by working with the local authorities and other agencies.
- 1.6 For any new homes where adaptations are required, these will be considered outside of this policy due to potential issues / concerns with defect liabilities.

2 Legal obligations, good practice and regulation

- 2.1 SHS has no statutory duty to provide aids and adaptations directly to residents; however, we must meet legal requirements and ensure compliance with the Social Housing Regulator's Safety and Quality Standard.
- 2.2 This policy operates within the context of the following legal and regulatory frameworks:
 - Data Protection Act (2018)
 - The Regulator for Social Housing Standards
 - Equalities Act (2010)
 - The Care Act (2014)
 - Housing Act (1980) and (1995)

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- The Human Rights Act (1998)
- 2.3 The Safety and Quality Standard states:
“Adaptations
Registered providers must clearly communicate to tenants and relevant organisations how they will assist tenants seeking housing adaptations services.
Registered providers must co-operate with tenants, appropriate local authority departments and other relevant organisations so that a housing adaptations service is available to tenants where appropriate.”
- 2.4 We review our compliance with the regulatory standards each year to ensure we continue to comply.
- 3 Aims of this policy**
- 3.1 The key aims of this policy are to:
- ensure that the needs of our residents are prioritised and met, subject to the provision of available funding and suitability of the home for the adaptation(s)
 - fully utilise our available housing stock by matching resident’s needs with already adapted properties where possible
 - ensure works carried out are as a result of an assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT) or by our in-house trusted assessors. If a resident does not have an OT, the local authority can assist with this. The OT assessment will also determine the extent of the work and its priority in relation to the resident’s needs
 - fund adaptations up to the value of £1,000. For adaptations in excess of this, to work with the local authorities and other agencies to obtain suitable funding e.g. the local authority Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG), whilst achieving value for money
 - ensure that there are clear lines of communication with the local authority
 - comply with all regulatory requirements when assisting the local authority
- 4 What are aids and adaptations?**
- 4.1 Aids and adaptations are alterations to make a resident’s home easier to live in, so that individuals can enjoy more independence. There are two categories commonly used for aids and adaptations work – minor adaptation and major adaptations.
- 4.2 *Minor adaptations*
- 4.2.1 Sutton Housing Society considers minor adaptations to be those that cost under £1,000.

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4.2.2 Once a resident's need has been identified, the necessary work will be carried out on behalf of Sutton Housing Society via our responsive repairs contractors unless the adaptation required is of a specialist nature. In this case, quotes will be obtained from approved contractors.

4.2.3 Examples of minor adaptations include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Installation of lever taps
- Installation of handrails / grab rails
- Installation of door / wall protectors (from wheelchairs)
- Replacement door handles / cupboard handles

4.3 *Major adaptations*

4.3.1 Sutton Housing Society considers major adaptations to be those that cost over £1,000 and is happy to contribute up to £1000 towards the cost of major adaptations should the adaptation be funded via a disabled facilities grant and if permission is given by SHS for such an adaptation.

4.3.2 The London Borough of Sutton (LBS) has a statutory responsibility towards funding and delivering aids and adaptations. They can award a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) to cover the cost of adaptations needed to your property as detailed by an occupational therapist. You will be assessed by LBS to determine whether you are eligible for a DFG.

4.3.2.1 If you are eligible for a DFG, LBS will tell you how much you will be awarded, having taken into consideration your income and savings. If you are eligible for a DFG, LBS will oversee the adaptation and will liaise directly with us and seek our consent for the work. (Please note that consent is not automatically given and we may need to consider other housing options for you). A DFG will not affect any benefits you get.

4.3.3 Where the local authority wishes to arrange a major adaptation to an SHS home, permission must be sought from SHS before any adaptation work starts. This is to ensure that the adaptation is reasonable and appropriate at the specific property and to allow SHS to consider any tenancy related matters that may influence our decision.

4.3.4 In some circumstances it may be reasonable to meet the resident's needs by asking them to consider moving to another property. For example, where:

- it would be more cost effective to provide the adaptation in another property that already benefits from an existing adaptation or is likely to be available (void property) within a reasonable period of time and is more suitable

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- it is considered likely that a resident will need to move to other accommodation within the foreseeable future to meet longer term housing / health needs
- the property is under occupied and it is considered there would be demand for the property from larger households. The option of a transfer will be discussed with the resident and their views considered before a decision is made. Assistance with the transfer will be provided if required.

4.3.5 Examples of major adaptations include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Installation of a level access shower
- Installation of a through floor lift / stair lift (including to communal areas)
- Extension
- Major kitchen adaptations e.g. improving access by having lower height worktops and units

5 Trusted assessors and accessing occupational therapists

- 5.1 Sutton Housing Society provides training for some employees to be recognised as trusted assessors. This means that these employees can carry out assessments with the aim of enabling individuals to remain safe and independent at home, with some minor aids and / or adaptations.
- 5.2 You can access the occupational therapy service via the local authority or your GP. There is often a delay in an appointment being made and when they are available, the occupational therapist will arrange to visit you at home and will assess your needs and what adaptations are required; this information will then be passed to the local authority (if it is a major adaptation) or to SHS if it is a minor adaptation required.

6 Servicing, repairs, renewal and insurance of aids and adaptations

- 6.1 Sutton Housing Society accepts responsibility for the repair, renewal, servicing and insurance for aids and adaptations that we have fully funded e.g. minor adaptations.
- 6.2 The servicing, repair, renewal and insurance of major adaptations such as stair lifts, through floor lifts, ceiling tracks for hoists, Clos-o-mats or other equipment provided by Occupational Therapists, is the responsibility of the individual resident and not SHS. It is important that residents understand this. These items should be included in the DFG application, to cover the on-going costs.

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7 Equality and diversity

7.1 This policy promotes equality and diversity by enabling people with disabilities to maintain independence and to remain living safely in their home for longer.

8 Monitoring and delivery

8.1 This policy is subject to approval by the Housing Operations Committee (HOC).

8.2 The HOC will formally approve this policy and review it every three years or sooner if there is a change in regulation, legislation or codes of practice.