



## **Aids and Adaptations Policy**

### **Policy statement**

Solon will carry out adaptations to its properties to enable residents to continue to live independently within the community and their homes. We aim to meet the needs of all residents in the provision of aids and adaptations whilst ensuring efficient management of the resources dedicated to this service.

### **Scope of the Policy**

This policy describes how Solon identifies the need for, and responds to requests for, adaptations to properties.

The policy covers all Solon's rented properties and responds to any type of need for a physical aid or adaptation to a property, except for those arising purely from changes to a household size.

The policy enables staff to make decisions about providing aids and adaptations and it enables residents to know what they can expect of us.

Solon recognise that people living in social housing are more likely to require aids and adaptations with 42% of social tenants, in comparison to 17% nationally, having a disability or long-term illness. The results of the Solon 2008 status survey confirmed that 45% of respondents consider someone within their household to have a disability. We are therefore committed to providing appropriate aids and adaptations wherever possible because we recognise the wider cost of not doing so: these include increased needs for home care or periods in hospital, and enforced moves which disrupt the lives of individuals and communities.

The policy outlines how Solon will work in partnership with the Local authority to ensure development of an agreed way of working to ensure provision of appropriate adaptations to residents.

### **Principles**

We have developed this policy with the following guiding principles:

- We will provide aids and adaptations which meet the physical needs of a resident and which result in an improvement in quality of life, increasing opportunities for independent living, the prevention of accidents or which enable mobility.

- The overriding guidance for the implementation of this policy are:
  - Compliance with disability discrimination legislation i.e. the 2005 Disability Discrimination Act.
  - Business Plan Objective 2: To deliver cost effective, quality, customer focused and responsive housing management services which meet customers' needs and expectations and maintain the efficiency of the business.
  - Business Plan Objective 3: To deliver cost effective, quality, customer focused and responsive maintenance and reinvestment services which meet customers' needs and expectations and ensure that our housing is maintained in good condition and to current standards.
  - Business Plan Objective 4: To deliver cost effective, quality, customer focused and responsive supported housing services which meet customers' needs and expectations.
  - Business Plan Objective 6: To prioritise equality and diversity issues in all areas of activity and conduct all work in accordance with Solon's Equalities and Diversity Policy and Code of Practice.
- We will seek funding through referral to an Occupational Therapist and application for a Local Authority Disabled Facilities Grant where possible, but where such funds are not available we will meet the costs from our own resources, wherever we can reasonably do so and our budget permits.
- We will set an annual budget for aids and adaptations work, taking account of:
  - Actual expenditure in the previous year.
  - Known or anticipated demand for the coming year.
  - Commitments in relation to disability legislation.
  - Our objective of meeting all needs for aids and adaptations each year.
  - The demands of our business plan.
- The budget for the year 2009/10 is £3,165. This will however be kept under review and it is recognised that, if the budget is fully committed earlier in the year, a request may be made to the Chief Executive and Finance Director to increase it.
- We will seek appropriate specialist advice about proposed adaptations but recognise that we can minimise delays in the case of straightforward requests. Works costing over £1,000 will require an assessment and report by an Occupational Therapist; works under £1,000 may be authorised as per our authorisation signature guidance, will not be means tested and will be fast-tracked for completion with 28 days. In exceptional circumstances

Solon may consider paying towards aids and adaptations over £1,000 where there is an emergency need and no other source of funding.

- We will grant permission for aids and adaptations work funded externally in all circumstances except where the long-term viability of the property concerned may be affected.
- We will provide support to residents to ensure that the long term repair and upkeep of specialist electrical equipment such as a stairlift is maintained.
- We will provide residents with advice on other options which might be considered, including the availability of local authority disabled facilities grants, moving home and so on. Where moving home is an option we will provide practical support to help achieve this.
- We will make appropriate arrangements for the future management of adapted properties, recording available facilities and seeking to let properties in future in a way which makes use of those facilities.
- We will not increase rents or other charges following an adaptation unless the adaptation has a significant impact on a property's value, for example by providing an additional room.
- We will publicise this policy, its objectives and its outcomes, through communications with residents including our residents' handbook, residents' newsletter and website. We will also produce a leaflet on obtaining adaptations for general distribution.
- We will establish good working relationships with local authority partners to:
  - Ensure that our policies and procedures are understood.
  - Provide access to alternative funding where this is available.
  - Ensure that we receive effective help and advice where required.
  - Establish agreements with regard to partnership working.

## **Application**

The following associated documents set out the way in which this policy will be applied:

- Aids and adaptations procedure.
- Allocations and Lettings policy.

## **Monitoring and Review**

We will monitor access to the service provided under this policy to ensure equality and use the results to improve the service and to inform budgetary changes.

We will liaise with the local authority and consult best practice to ensure that this policy and its procedure are kept in line with current requirements.

We will agree and review with the Resident Participation and Equal Opportunities Working Group any changes to the policy, service standards and satisfaction feedback from service users.

We will review this policy at least once every three years, however will update the policy to reflect current practice as required.

This policy is effective from: April 2009

This policy will be reviewed by: April 2012

The responsible officer is: Customer Service Director

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