

AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY

1.0 Policy Aims and Objectives

- 1.1 Caldmore supports the Social Model of Disability and is committed to providing a transparent, equitable, efficient and culturally sensitive service in response to identified need and requests for aids and adaptations. This will be within the constraints of the resources available.
- 1.2 We will work closely with partners in Walsall MBC to access the services of occupational therapists, and Disabled Facilities Grants where appropriate.
- 1.3 We will comply with legislative and regulatory requirements and work within the spirit of the Housing Corporations guide: "Minor adaptations without Delay."
- 1.4 To comply with good practice guidance including the Disability Rights Commission's 'Open4All 2004' and the National Housing Federations 'Level Threshold' guidance 2005
- 1.5 As far as practicably possible, enable our disabled tenants to remain in their own home with a move to alternative accommodation being the last resort

2.0 Definitions

- 2.1 For the purpose of this policy, and the related procedure, an aid or adaptation is an alteration or addition to any aspect of a dwelling which is provided in order to make it easier or safer for use by an older person or disabled person. This may be the tenant or a member of their family or household and throughout this policy references to the tenant will include their family or household.
- 2.2 A disability is defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- 2.3 Caldmore recognises that disability can take many forms and can affect persons ability to fully access and enjoy their home.

3.0 Legal and Regulatory Framework

- 3.1 The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (sections 1 & 2). Requires Local Authority Social Services to assist people with disabilities to obtain aids and adaptations to make their home more suitable for their needs.

- 3.2 The NHS & Community Care Act 1990 established a requirement for the Local Authority to carry out a needs assessment where it appears to social services (now social care and inclusion) that a person may be in need of community care services. This assessment would include identifying needs which could be met by making adaptations to the property.
- 3.3 The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 and the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 extended the above right to carers.
- 3.4 The Disabled Persons Services, Consultation and Representation Act 1986 (section 4) places a duty on Local Authorities to assess the needs of disabled persons when asked to do so by the person or their carer.
- 3.5 The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 s.23 provided for Disabled Facilities Grants available from Local Authorities to carry out “works that are necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of a disabled occupant provided that it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the works having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling.”
- 3.6 The Community Care (Delayed Discharges) Act 2003, part 2 provides that any community care equipment and minor adaptations for “the purposes of assisting with nursing at home or aiding daily living which a person has been assessed to need, and for which he or she is eligible, should be provided free if the cost is less than £1000.00.
- 3.7 Housing Corporation circular F4-02/98 determines that funding of adaptations by Housing Associations is a permitted use of rent surplus fund.
- 3.8 From December 2006 The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 Part III sections 21 & 24 places a duty on landlords to make ‘reasonable’ adjustments where it is otherwise “impossible or unreasonably difficult” for a disabled person to enjoy the dwelling. These duties relate to:
 - making changes to practices, policies or procedures
 - providing auxiliary aids and services
- 3.9 The good practice guide ‘Delivering Housing Adaptations for Disabled People’ (June 2006 edition) describes the statutory duties of social care and inclusion and housing authorities in relation to their adaptation service and advises Local Authorities on establishing a high quality service.

3.10 Disabled Living Foundation

- 3.10.1 The Disabled Living Foundation (DLF) has a wealth of information for people seeking advice on adaptations and support. Their website www.dlf.org.uk and contact details should be given to any disabled or older person requiring information or assistance.
- 3.10.2 A copy of their fact sheet ‘Sources of funding and obtaining equipment for disabled people and older people’ (see Appendix F) may be given to a tenant who we have been unable, for whatever reason, to assist with their request for an aid or adaptation.

Other points to consider for inclusion should cover any principles inherent in the procedure such as:

- 1. the response and responsibilities for responding to requests for A&A's*
- 2. budgeting and spend limits*
- 3. technical advice*
- 4. repair and servicing*
- 5. alternatives to A&A's*
- 6. maintaining database info of properties with adaptations*
- 7. customer info & publicising/promoting*

4. POLICY STATEMENT

- 4.1 Caldmore is committed to developing an organisational culture which values people from all sections of the community and the contribution each individual can make to our work.
- 4.2 This means that we value each individual in their own right, regardless of whether or not they belong to any particular section of society.
- 4.3 Caldmore aims to ensure and promote equality of opportunity for all. We are therefore opposed to discrimination on any grounds including colour, race, nationality, religion and belief, sex (including gender re-assignment), marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, trade union membership or any other unjustifiable criteria.
- 4.4 This document sets out our approach to responding to the needs of our disabled customers in a sensitive, efficient and responsible way.
- 4.5 We aim to take a proactive approach by way of promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people in terms of their housing experience.
- 4.6 We will make best use of our stock in an attempt to ensure that disabled customers are enabled to access housing that is appropriate to their needs.
- 4.7 We aim to continuously improve our services through partnership arrangements and a best practice approach.

5 MINOR AND MAJOR ADAPTATIONS

- 5.1 Requests for **Minor Adaptations**, expected to cost under £1000 will be processed under the routine element of the day to day budget once the Surveyor is satisfied that the request will meet the customer's need and that it is practicable. The Surveyor, in liaison with the Housing Officer, will undertake a home visit in all of these scenarios. Once agreed, these works will be undertaken within 28 days. Minor adaptations include the provision of ramps, grab rails etc. These works will be funded through the day to day maintenance budget.

5.2 Requests for **Major Adaptations**, expected to cost over £1000 and be funded either by:-

1. The Local Authority Disabled Facilities Grant
2. The Housing Corporation
3. The Annual Aids and Adaptations budget

Major adaptations include; level access shower, stair lifts, widening doors, mechanical hoists over baths etc. These will always require an assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT).

6.0 TENANTS FROM (BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC) BME COMMUNITIES

6.1 Black and minority ethnic communities face a number of potential problems in accessing an adaptation service. Firstly the experience of a disabling environment; secondly the problems associated with communicating their needs or accessing service information in a language that is not their native tongue; thirdly erroneous assumptions being made by those assessing or providing the service as to their cultural or religious practice or needs. The diversity of ethnic minority communities makes this a complex issue for agencies to address.

6.2 Wherever possible assessments should be undertaken by staff who speak the language of the service recipient. At the very least they should be suitably trained to recognise the cultural and religious diversity of minority ethnic communities in their locality. As a minimum an interpretation service should be available to service users from BME communities. It is desirable that those involved in the interpreting role are aware of the technical terminology and concepts utilised in the assessment process but we recognise that this may be hard to achieve.

7.0 PROCURING THE WORK

7.1 Careful consideration will be given to both the Association's own Procurement Policy, Standing Orders, Schedule of Rates and the Housing Corporation technical guidance.

7.2 Contractors being invited to tender will be identified from the Association's Approved Contractor List.

7.3 The providers of equipment needing routine maintenance, eg, stair lifts, may not be willing to retain responsibility for its ongoing maintenance. Where such responsibility is not accepted by an external agency it should be clearly established who is to arrange such repair and maintenance and who is to pay for it.

8.0 RENT AND SERVICE CHARGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The weekly rent of a property will only be increased following adaptation works if the work has resulted in additional rooms. Conversely the rent may be reduced if a bedroom is lost in order to accommodate adaptation works.
- 8.2 A service charge will be introduced where adaptations require a maintenance contract to be taken out to maintain/service equipment installed.