

# Equipment and Adaptations Policy



Directorate: Property Services

Date of Issue: August 2021

Revision Date: August 2023

Version: V5

## Document Information

### Scope:

Salix Homes' aims and objectives are as follows:

1. To enable customers to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for individuals and their families – providing an individualised solution to the problems experienced by people in a disabling environment to continue to live independently in their homes and to enjoy a good quality of life through the provision of Equipment and Adaptations, wherever it is feasible and cost effective to do so.
2. To consider accessibility and ensure the safety of disabled people in our buildings during emergencies, these requirements include accessible escape routes for our customers.
3. To recognise however, that in all situations it has a responsibility to make best possible use of its existing housing stock, including adapted properties. Salix Homes do not normally permit level access showers in flats above ground floor level, or in houses where the adaption is upstairs. We will however treat each case individually and take into consideration a number of factors including the length of time a tenant may need to find suitable alternative housing working alongside our neighbourhoods' team.
4. Each year Salix Homes have a dedicated budget available for expenditure on Equipment and Adaptations to augment the Community Health and Social Care Teams (CHSC) efforts to meet its obligations. This funding is split into two categories;
  - Major adaptations – these are classed as large scale works such as:
    - Level access showers
    - Wet rooms
    - Adapted Kitchens
    - Stair lifts
    - Ramps
    - Extensions
  - Minor adaptations – (typically under £1,000) these are classed smaller works which do not require an Occupational Therapist assessment, such as:
    - grab rails
    - lever taps
    - half step

## Document Information

- Mopstick rails
  - Access ramps
  - Partial wet rooms
  - Door entry systems
5. These distinctions are based on the nature of the work required in order to implement the adaptation and do not correspond to the impact the adaptation will have on the individual requiring such work. It is understood that both minor and major adaptation work can impact significantly on an individual's quality of life.
  6. Minor Adaptations will be carried out by their Repairs and Maintenance Service and these works will 'strive' to be completed within 10 business days from day of notification. This service will comply with all legislation and regulatory requirements as set out in our service standards and Occupational Therapist's Guide for 'Minor adaptations without delay'.
  7. All aids and adaptations work completed in a property will be recorded on keystone as part of the property details. Wherever practical, this information will be used to ensure that any future allocations are made to applicants requiring such adaptations.
  8. All aids and adaptations work undertaken by Salix will be carried out following an assessment by the Occupational Therapist (OT) to determine eligibility and both short/long term medical needs. If the customer does not have an OT, they will be advised to contact their Local Authority, as an assessment of their disability is required.
  9. OT's assessment will determine the urgency of the adaptation work required. Whilst guided by this, Salix will also work to ensure a balance between both priorities need and time spent on the waiting list of no longer than 12 months.
  10. Work closely with our nominated Partnering Contractor to identify opportunities to proactively complete Equipment and Adaptations where the need for such can be clearly identified and is supported where appropriate by the advice of a qualified O.T.
  11. All major adaptation work will be visited by a Project Surveyor a least once whilst works commence and handed over and signed as complete on completion of works.
  12. On completion of these works a satisfaction survey will be posted to the customer to monitor the overall performance from Salix and its nominated contractor, this information will be used monthly for Management Reports to ensure that our aids and adaptations processes are delivered effectively and that timescales are achieved.
  13. We will work with Local Authorities wishing to develop a Disabled Housing Register, either locally or sub-regionally, to facilitate the matching of disabled residents with properties suitably adapted for their needs.
  14. We will comply with legal and statutory requirements in relation to the provision of disabled adaptations.
  15. Information on the needs and requirements of disabled applicants will also be utilised to inform any subsequent development programmes.

## Document Information

16. Stock condition surveys will be carried out by qualified Project Surveyors who will highlight where necessary any bathroom / kitchen component due for replacement that may require adapting.
17. The Project Surveyor will make a desktop assessment of tenants needs utilising the Feasibility Assessment criteria.
18. Planned Investment works for 2020/23 that require either a new bathroom or kitchen replacement and is highlighted by the Project Surveyor as part of the survey as needing an adaption and or the customer meets the criteria from the feasibility assessment criteria will have the adaption works, any shortfall of monies from the standard investment replacement will come out of the annual Aids & Adaptation budget.
19. All adaptation works will be monitored and reported monthly by the Property Investment Manager and the Repairs and Maintenance Manager, to enable best practise and Value for Money.
20. To ensure that availability of Equipment and Adaptations is actively promoted to our customers and that good quality advice and guidance on the provision of such works, including the options available to them and that the likely timescale for completion of the works.

## Service Standards / Performance Measures / Corporate Strategy:

Salix Homes will strive to ensure excellent standards and levels of service through our preferred contractors and value for money. We will do this by closely measuring and monitoring our contractors in the following areas:

### Major adaptations

Service Standard: Salix Homes will complete all adaptations within the specified timescales

Performance measure: Percentage of adaptations completed in timescale – target 100%

### Feasibility Assessment

Service Standard: Salix Homes will carry out a feasibility assessment for each referral received for the Occupational Therapist

Performance measure: Number of feasibility assessments carried out

### Right to Review

Service Standard: Salix Homes will undertake a review of a decision if requested to do so by a customer

Performance measure: Number of reviews carried out and number of reviews carried out with specified timeframe of 10 days

### Programmed schemes

Service Standard: Salix Homes will maximise opportunities to augment the adaptations budget

Performance measure: Number of OT assessments requested, and amount of funding allocated for adaptations

### Request for Adaptations

Service Standard: Salix Homes will carry out adaptations to properties when it is deemed beneficial for the customer and/or the property

## Document Information

Performance measure: Number of adaptations carried out as a % of total requests

### Rehousing

Service Standard: Salix Homes will seek to rehouse customers when rehousing has been identified as the solution to meet their needs

Performance measure: Number of customers identified for rehousing and number of customers successfully rehoused

### Adapted Property Register

Service Standard: Salix Homes will record all adaptations on their property data bases

Performance measure: Percentage of properties recorded – target 100%

### Minor Adaptations

Service Standard: Salix Homes will carry out minor adaptations less than the value of £1000

Performance measure: Number of adaptations carried out

### Risks:

**Risk One** – Failure to provide an efficient and effective Equipment and Adaptations service could lead to a decrease in customer satisfaction, increased complaints causing reputational damage.

#### Mitigating Factors:

- Equipment and Adaptations policy.
- Contractor performance monitoring and agreed contractual performance measures.
- Repairs are prioritised based on risk of damage or health and safety.
- Customer satisfaction surveys.
- Post inspection of completed work.
- Staff training.
- Partnership working with contractor.

**Risk Two** – Failure to provide an efficient and effective Equipment and Adaptations service could lead to damage and depreciation of assets.

#### Mitigating Factors:

- Equipment and Adaptations policy.
- Structured risk-based prioritisation of repairs.
- Contractor performance monitoring and agreed contractual performance measures.
- Post inspection of completed work.
- Emergency out of hours service

**Risk Three** – Failure to provide an efficient and effective Equipment and Adaptations service could lead to Health & Safety risks to our customers and the general public.

#### Mitigating Factors:

- Equipment and Adaptations policy.
- Structured risk-based prioritisation of repairs.
- Contractor performance monitoring and agreed contractual performance measures.
- Post inspection of completed work.
- Emergency out of hours service
- Consideration on modern building design approaches, technology, and building use and operation.

## Document Information

**Risk Four** – Failure to provide an efficient and effective Equipment and Adaptations service could lead to an increase in statutory disrepair claims and personal injury claims.

Mitigating Factors:

- Equipment and Adaptations policy.
- Structured risk-based prioritisation of repairs.
- Contractor performance monitoring and agreed contractual performance measures.
- Post inspection of completed work.
- Emergency out of hours service

**Risk Five** – The service delivered does not represent value for money for customers.

Mitigating Factors:

- Procurement in compliance with European OJEU regulation.
- Procurement in compliance with Salix Homes Financial Regulations
- Contractor performance monitoring and agreed contractual performance measures.
- Customer satisfaction surveys.
- Post inspection of completed work.

### Related Policy/Procedure & Documents:

- Salix Corporate Plan
- Asset Management Strategy
- Salix Homes Tenancy Agreement
- Management Move Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Tenant Feedback & Complaints Policy
- Salix Homes Information Security Policy
- Salix Homes Tenant Warning Database
- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Voids Policy and Procedure
- Equipment and Adaptations Procedure
- Allocations Policy
- Property Investment Policy

### Related Legislation / Relevant Regulation:

Social Model of Disability (Appendix 1) statement from Policy – Creating a fairer and more equal society.

The social model is used as a way of understanding disability. It conveys that disability is created by barriers. The barriers generally fall into three categories:

- The environment – including inaccessible buildings and services
- People’s attitudes – stereotyping, discrimination and prejudices
- Organisations – inflexible policies, practices and procedures

Using the social model helps to identify solutions to the barriers disabled people experience. It encourages the removal of these barriers within society, or the reductions of their effects, rather than trying to fix an individual’s impairment or health condition.

**Document Information**

The social model is the preferred model for disabled people and encourages society to be more inclusive.

Salix Homes will, in line with the statutory duties of the Housing Act 1985 and the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person Act 1970 (Sections 1 & 2), arrange the provision of appropriate adaptations following assessment and recommendation by a qualified Occupational Therapist and identify the needs of disabled people and housing provision in our area.

The NHS & Community Act 1990 – provides the context for the assessment of and response to potential needs including the adaptation of properties.

The Carers (recognition and Services) Act 1985 and the Carers and Disabled Act 1986 (Section 4)

The Disabled person’s Services, consultation and Regeneration Act 1996 (Section 23)  
The Care Act 2014

Salix Homes will comply with the legislation set down in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Equality Act 2010 to ensure our customers have access to fair and equitable services. Salix Homes will comply with all legislation and regulatory requirements as set out in ‘Minor Adaptations without Delay – a practical guide and technical specification for Housing Associations’ Published by the College of Occupational Therapists and the Housing Corporation in January 2006

Salix Homes will comply with the requirements of the Home Standard and Tenancy Standard set out in the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England 2012 (amended 2015). The Home Standard requires Salix Homes to deliver a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service that meets the needs of customers; the Tenancy Standard requires that Salix Homes makes best use of available housing considering the needs of customers.

To follow the review and recommendations from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) National Disability Strategy, July 2021 to make shared spaces in buildings more accessible to disabled users.

**Retention & Legal Basis for Storage:**

All processing purposes are stored in the Information Asset Register - Keystone  
All retention periods are captured in the Data Retention Schedule.

**Stakeholders:**

Stakeholder review will need to be completed as changed policy.

**Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)**

A DPIA was not completed upon reviewing this policy

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

An EIA was completed by the Investment Property Manager in June 2020. This policy is largely used by the elderly and individuals who may have a disability. There is no evidence that older individuals or those with a disability are disadvantaged or discriminated against.

## Document Information

This policy is in place to ensure their home is fit for purpose and that individual needs are met where possible.

## Introduction

Salix fully recognises the diverse needs of our customers and their family members who have disabilities. We have designed and operate our Aids and Adaptations procedures in line with the Social Model of Disability (Appendix 1). Salix work closely with our Local Authority Partners, Health Professionals and other relevant members such as the 'Access Accommodation Strategy Group' to best make use of our homes and stock.

Using the social model of disability, an adaptation is a modification to a disabling environment or structures in order to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for individuals and their families – providing an individualised solution to the problems experienced by people in a disabling environment.

This Policy applies to disabled persons who are permanent residents of Salix Homes social rented housing and who require aids and adaptations within their home. For individuals who are a named tenant on the tenancy agreement, must be registered as living at the property and if over 18 years of age be registered on the electoral roll for that address.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a disabled person as, 'Someone with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his / her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' This adverse effect is both substantial and long term.

## Feasibility Assessment for Major Adaptations

Salix Homes will undertake a feasibility assessment and in exceptional cases, for example, when the customer's circumstances are of a complex nature and/or the proposed adaptations may have a very significant impact on the property. Upon receipt of the OT referral, the feasibility assessment will be carried out in consultation with the OT along with our Project Surveyors.

The feasibility assessment will seek to establish:

- Sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired;
- Any mental disorder or impairment of any kind;
- Physically, substantially disability by illness, injury, impairment;
- Is the tenant registered disabled with a social services department;
- If there is a possibility for the customer to be moved to more suitable accommodation;
- Implications of the adaptation work when the property becomes available to relet, in particular the impact on future allocations and under occupancy issues;
- If the adaptation works are suitable for the customer;
- The feasibility of the adaptation in relation to the layout and structure of the property;
- The feasibility of the adaption in relation to the design or construction of a building, approach to, exit from or access to a building.



- Whether the estimated cost of the adaptation work is likely to be a significant amount that will diminish the yearly budget allocation;

Adaptations will not be carried out to a property where it is under-occupied by two bedrooms or more. Salix Homes will look to transfer residents to a more suitable property. Couples who need separate bedrooms for medical reasons will not be adversely affected by this rule and Salix will seek advice from medical professionals in such cases.

It may be decided that the resident's needs are best met through a managed move. This decision would be made by the Neighbourhoods Manager and Project Surveyor in consultation with the customer. A priority transfer within the association's stock would be approved under the Allocations Policy. The O.T. will be consulted on the suitability of a proposed property.

Salix Homes does not purchase adapted properties or properties suitable for adaptations on the open market.

Salix Homes is committed to providing a transparent, equitable and efficient disabled adaptation procurement and management service that addresses the needs of its customers.

Once the survey and the feasibility assessment has been carried out the Project Surveyor will cost up and send the full survey to the Property Investment Manager to either authorise for works to be carried out or pass to the relevant Housing Manager if an alternative property is needed.

Salix Homes will take a proactive approach to the installation of Equipment and Adaptations at the consultation phase of their programmed schemes.

Below are typical major adaptations followed by the time scales in which Salix Homes aim to complete the installation from the date of receiving an O.T recommendation:

Adaptation	Completion Times
Level Access or Wet Room	40 days
Stairlift	8 weeks
Ramp	40 days
Adapted Kitchen	40 days
Widening of Doors	40 days
Extensions	Subject to funding/planning

Stairlifts and hoists will be inspected by a qualified and compliant contractor and this will be arranged by Salix Homes Compliance Team.

## Re-housing as an alternative

Salix Homes have regard to the longer-term letting value of properties when evaluating requests for adaptations requiring structural or other substantial works, and may refuse to undertake, or give consent for works, which may make the future letting of the property problematic and/or not financially viable. Salix Homes will, therefore, no longer undertake referrals for through the floor lifts for this reason. In these cases, Salix Homes will strive to ensure the customers individual needs are met and re-housing maybe the preferred option.

Where re-housing is to be considered, customers will be a priority for appropriate housing in accordance with the letting policy.

Assistance may be offered to households whose current home is unsuitable for major adaptations, when the investment in major adaptation cannot be recycled or maintained for future use. Transfer to suitable alternative housing, or housing suitable for adaptation is generally the preferred option for meeting the customer's need in such cases.

Customers considered for re-housing may be eligible for financial assistance to cover relocation expenses. Salix Homes may subsidise or incentivise with the following:

- Organise and pay moving costs
- Supply and fit carpets for 2 rooms of the customer's choice
- Mat emulsion painting of 2 rooms of the customer's choice

## Possible Refusal of Adaptation Requests

Salix Homes are unlikely to invest in the provision of an adaptation where the benefit achieved for the customer is short term, not reasonable or practicable or is not strategically beneficial to do so. Such circumstances may include:

- When the customer is actively seeking re-housing
- When the adaptation is not structurally practicable
- When the tenancy is less than 2 years old except in exceptional circumstances e.g. following a stroke or accident
- When the property is under-occupied and extensive adaptations are requested
- When a request is made to provide a level access shower above ground floor level. Future letting ability can become an issue as many people with mobility problems who may benefit from a level access shower may have problems negotiating stairs

## Customer 'Right to Review'

The customer has the right to ask for any decision made in relation to their application for Equipment and Adaptations to be reviewed and should do so in writing regarding:

- Programmed Schemes
- Possible Refusal of Adaptation Requests
- Minor Adaptations