

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This policy relates to all Saffron Group owned properties with the exception of shared ownership properties.

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 Through efficient, effective management of resources and funding, Saffron Group is committed to providing a high quality Aids and Adaptations service to enable disabled residents to live safely and independently within their homes.
- 1.2 Delivery of this service will be in conjunction with Saffron Group's Aids and Adaptation strategy.

2. ELEMENTS OF THE POLICY

The key objectives of the Aids and Adaptations Policy are:

- To ensure that the identified needs of disabled residents are met accordingly, subject to the provision of available grant funding.
- To set out the criteria by which Saffron Group will assess all requests for adaptation work and identify any limitations to the service.
- To maximise all local authority grants and available resources for adaptations, having high regard for value for money at all times.
- To reconcile the expectations of residents who require adaptations with Saffron Group's duty to manage its housing stock effectively.
- To ensure there are clear channels of communication and established joint working practices with all partners in the areas where we operate.
- To assist the local authority comply with legal and statutory duties in relation to the provision of disabled adaptations.
- To comply with good practice guidance as appropriate.
- To understand the differing needs of our customers, including in relation to the equality strands and customers with additional support needs.
- To ensure that we identify and meet the needs of disabled residents accordingly, subject to the provision of available grant funding.

3. WORK COVERED BY THIS POLICY

- 3.1 Aids (**Minor Works**) (under £500 per property per year). These can include the provision of ramps, half-steps, handrails, grab rails, lever taps etc. and are funded by Saffron Group.

- These do not require an assessment from a healthcare professional or Occupational Therapist (OT) but we do reserve the right to seek the opinion of a healthcare professional.
- Saffron Group may also use this opportunity to look at the mid to long term needs and future suitability.
- A follow up letter may be sent to any resident when it is felt that the works carried out are unlikely to meet the long term needs of the individual.
- Saffron Group will aim to ensure that minor works are completed within 6 weeks.

3.2 Intermediate works/ adaptations

These require more extensive and complex work which can include the installation of stair lifts, level access showers, bathroom, and kitchen conversions as well as other access alterations and must be supported by appropriate grant funding. These works are typically between £500 and £15,000.

Work will only be carried out as a result of an OT assessment to determine eligibility and need and will be carried out in accordance with the existing priority timescales, although Saffron Group does not control or influence timescales associated with the OT assessment and grant funding process.

Saffron Group will not undertake adaptations to a property to facilitate the storage, charging, or accessibility for mobility scooters unless supported through the OT referral system, along with meeting all regulations and guidance.

Saffron Group will consider offering alternative solutions to meet the needs of the individual; this also includes referral for a move to a more suitable property.

3.3 Major works

This area covers all works with a value of over £15,000 and again must be supported by appropriate grant funding.

All major works will be individually reviewed by the Senior Management Team and part of this review process must consider alternative solutions to meet the needs of the individual; this also includes referral for a move to a more suitable property.

Work undertaken by Saffron Group will only be carried out as a result of an assessment by the OT to determine eligibility.

4. INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 Saffron Group can only accept submissions from applicants (or their immediate family) with an assured tenancy or an affordable rent tenancy. Tenants with a starter tenancy cannot be considered for an adaptation unless it is agreed prior to the start of the tenancy.

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- 4.2 Aside from minor works, all applicants will be subject to an individual assessment (normally by an OT) to consider the suitability of the property in conjunction with the individual needs of the applicant.
- 4.3 The assessment will include:
- Will the current property meet the needs of the applicant or would a move to alternative suitable accommodation be more appropriate.
 - Consideration of the future impact on re-letting of the property after adaptation works.
 - The estimated cost of the adaptation work.
- 4.4 Saffron Group does reserve the right to refuse an adaptation if the property is not suitable or appropriate, there is not considered sufficient long-term benefit of the works or the works are considered too expensive, or if the application is not supported by grant funding.
In the event of a decision not to proceed, Saffron Group will explain the reasons directly with the customer.
Any appeals will be dealt with under Saffron Group's Complaints policy
- 5. TRANSFER TO A SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE PROPERTY**
Saffron Group will seek to transfer tenants to a more suitable property within their stock where appropriate and in discussion with the tenant. A final decision, along with any discretionary payment assisting a move, will be made by the Assistant Director of Housing Operations and the Assistant Director of Strategic Asset Management.
- 6. COMPLETED AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS WORK**
All works completed to a property will be recorded as part of the property details. Wherever practical, this information will be used to ensure that any future allocations to this property are made to applicants requiring such adaptation.
- 7. SERVICE CHARGES**
In order to maintain the safe operation of mechanical adaptations and meet regulative and statutory requirements Saffron Group will seek to levy a service charge for the maintenance of equipment where required. However, should the applicant wish to arrange their own service and maintenance agreement this must be agreed by Saffron Group prior to the grant application. Saffron Group can request maintenance or service history.
- 8. RECYCLING/REMOVAL OF EQUIPMENT**
In conjunction with Social Services, Saffron Group will consider re-using equipment that has become redundant in its current situation. For any bespoke equipment remaining within the property upon termination Saffron Group reserves the right to charge for its removal and associated works. Reasons for this action must be communicated prior to removal.

9. FUTURE TRANSFERS AND MUTUAL EXCHANGES

If residents for whom Saffron Group has undertaken adaptations wish to transfer or mutually exchange to another property it is at Saffron Group's discretion to determine whether such a move can take place in accordance with relevant housing legislation. Saffron Group can refuse a transfer or mutual exchange if the move is to a property to that is less suitable.

10. RE-ALLOCATION OF AN ADAPTED PROPERTY

In agreement with the tenant, Saffron Group reserves the right to re-allocate properties with adaptations in the event that the person requiring the adaptation and/or the occupants no longer needs the adaptations. In such cases Saffron Group will work with the tenants with a view to finding more suitable alternative accommodation.

11. PRIORITISATION

Saffron Group reserves the right in exceptional circumstance to escalate or prioritise the delivery of adaptive works. This may only be done with approval of the Executive Team.

12. REMOVAL OF ADAPTATIONS

Saffron Group will consider any requests for removal of equipment or adaptations installed for the purpose of meeting a disability. In determining whether to remove equipment/adaptation Saffron Group will have regard to:

- Terms under which tenancy was accepted.
- Changes to circumstances of the tenant
- Longer term suitability of the property
- Effect on the asset owned by Saffron Group

13. METHODS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

13.1 In order to ensure we continually improve our service we will regularly ask for feedback from our customers and stakeholders. In addition, we will seek best practice and ensure we keep up to date with current legislation.

13.2 Performance against budget and target timescales will be reported to the Senior Management Team and Saffron Group's Customer Voice on an agreed basis.

14. TRAINING AND INFORMATION

We are committed to training our staff and will ensure that all staff involved in delivering the Aids and Adaptations Service are aware of this Policy, relevant procedures and their own role.

15. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AND RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

To enable disabled tenants to live independently within their homes, Saffron Group will promote the provision of aids and adaptations to its properties. This will include a published service statement with clear and measurable service standards.

16. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

16.1 Saffron Group will seek to provide the optimal service relative to funds available. Saffron Group will seek to maximise grant and other funding sources.

16.2 Tenant Contribution. The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a means tested grant and therefore some residents may be required to make a contribution towards the adaptations work. This will be evaluated by the DFG fund provider upon receipt of the OTs referral. If a contribution is requested this should be payable four weeks prior to any works commencing or agreed payment plan agreed and signed.

17. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant legislation to the Aids and Adaptations Policy includes:

- **The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (sections 1 and 2).** This places a duty on Social Services to assist disabled persons in obtaining suitable adaptations within their homes.
- **S.23 of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.** Provides for the (DFG) administered by local authorities. This is mandatory for certain adaptations and means tested. Residents may also be required to contribute to the cost of the works irrespective of value (subject to a test of financial resources). Authorities also have powers to make discretionary grants (see Appendix A for the full criteria listed under S.23).
- **Disability Discrimination Act 2005.** This provides a definition of a disabled person for the purpose of this policy. Part 3 of this Act requires service providers to make 'reasonable adjustments' to services without which it would be impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to use the service. Whilst this legislation refers to public spaces and does not govern the inside of resident's homes, Saffron Group will work towards ensuring both public and private spaces are accessible for all our residents.
- **Equality Act 2006.** Covering physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

18. POLICY APPEALS

Any appeals or complaints received relating to this policy will be dealt with under Saffron Groups's Complaints Policy.

19. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Saffron Group will ensure that all aids and adaptations work is carried out with full regard to Health and Safety Legislation, appropriate Codes of Practice and Saffron Group's Health and Safety Policy.

20. MONITORING

In order to monitor the quality of the overall service, Saffron Group will request all residents who have benefited from the Aids and Adaptations Service to complete a

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feedback survey. Feedback on performance will be against targets and budget and reported to the Senior Management Team.

21. REVIEW PERIOD

The Aids and Adaptations Policy will be reviewed every year to ensure it meets current legislation and reflects best practice. This review will include consultation with both service users and our partners.

Consulted with Customer Voice	Yes
Board/Committee	SMT
Date Approved	08/02/2022
Review Date	December 2023
Officer	Planned Improvements Manager
Version Number	3.0