Solihull Community Housing
Shaping our neighbourhoods

Adaptations Policy
2024

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ADAPTATIONS POLICY FOR TENANTS

October 2024

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Solihull Community Housing (SCH) manages and maintains council homes and delivers housing services on behalf of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC). Although SCH provides day-to-day housing services, the Council remains the owner of the housing stock and is your landlord. The Council retains the responsibility for ensuring your home is managed in line with the Consumer Standards.

1.0 Purpose

Solihull Community Housing's (SCH) aim is to support tenants to remain living independently in their homes and carry out essential daily activities for as long as possible. To enable this, SCH directly funds adaptations for its residents. The aim of this policy is to provide guidance and understanding of SCH's approach to the provision of adaptations.

Throughout this policy, tenants of SCH will be referred to as residents.

This policy is being delivered in conjunction with the Council's Housing Assistance Policy for private sector residents which covers adaptations delivered using Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) and other assistance under the 1996 Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and the Regulatory Reform Order 2002. The principles of assistance across both policies are the same and, for equity, the purposes for which assistance will be given will mirror those in the legislation as outlined later in this policy.

1.0 Scope

Under the terms of this policy, a person is regarded as being disabled if they have a physical, sensory, or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities within their home. A long-term effect refers to disabilities that have lasted for at least 12 months, or where the effects of which will last for at least 12 months, or which are likely to last for the remainder of a person's life.

The policy specifically refers to all disabled adaptations to properties managed by SCH. It covers both works under £1,000 and/or which do not include structural alterations, known as 'minor works' and works costing over £1,000 and/or which do include structural alterations which are known as 'major works'.

This policy specifically relates to council tenants and **does not** extend to;

- homeowners
- leaseholders
- tenants within the private rented sector
- tenants of other social rented properties

Assistance for those listed above is available through Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). Please refer to the council's Housing Assistance Policy for more information.

2.0 Key Principles and Service Standards

This policy aims to support SCH's vision of supporting residents to be healthy, happy, safe and resilient by adapting homes to enable our residents to remain living safely and independently for as long as possible.

The adoption of this policy will ensure that there is a fair and consistent approach to all residents' requests for adaptations in their homes.

SCH has committed to improving service standards and will undertake regular customer satisfaction surveys to ensure continual service improvement.

3.0 Legal and Regulatory Framework

The Council and SCH have considered the following legislation when developing this policy.

The Care Act 2014

The Care Act is applicable to adults, and it makes clear that local authorities with responsibility for welfare must provide or arrange services that help prevent people developing needs for care and support or delay people deteriorating such that they would need on-going care and support.

The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970, Section 2)

This is applicable specifically to children and gives local authorities with responsibility for welfare a duty to assess and support disabled or chronically sick children with assistance in arranging adaptations or the provision of additional facilities to promote safety, comfort and convenience.

The Equality Act 2010

The act prohibits discrimination against people with protected characteristics that are specified in Section 4. Section 29 of the Act provides that the council, in providing a service to a section of the public, must not discriminate against a person with a protected characteristic who requires the service, by not providing the person with that service. However, Section 15 provides that discrimination on grounds of disability may be justified in law if the council has appropriately balanced the needs of the person with a disability and those of others in need of accommodation. Making better overall use of the housing stock and meeting more needs, including those with disabilities, is a legitimate aim. The cost of adaptations and the suitability of the current accommodation (including under-occupation) are relevant factors when considering proportionality. Alternative means of meeting needs other than adapting the current property, including transfers to more suitable accommodation or residents contributing to costs are options which may be considered.

The Housing Act 1996 (as amended)

In determining this policy, regard has been given to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy, which complies with the above Act.

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

This legislation governs the delivery of DFG and clearly sets out the purposes for which a DFG must be approved, subject to applicant eligibility. It is not possible for a public body to be the end beneficiary of a DFG funded adaptation, but for equity of service this policy mirrors the criteria set out in the 1996 Act.

4.0 Equalities Statement

SCH is committed to the principles of fairness, equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion. We define these concepts as:

a. Equality is being fair and ensuring that individuals, or groups of individuals, are not treated less favourably because of their protected characteristics. The law defines protected characteristics as age, disability, gender reassignment/transgender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnicity and national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
b. Equality of opportunity means giving people an equal chance to access SCH's homes, services and jobs. It also means removing barriers for people who may be disadvantaged so that they have the same opportunities as their peers.
c. Diversity recognises that, though people have things in common with each other, they are also different in many ways. Diversity is what makes us different because of protected characteristics and other things such as life experiences.
d. Inclusion is where differences are seen as a benefit, and where perspectives and differences are recognised, leading to better decisions. Inclusion is about bringing diversity into action, allowing everyone to feel included and where people are proud to pull together to create an environment of mutual respect. Inclusion is also where people can feel that they belong because they are seen and valued for who they are and they can be their true self.

SCH meets its legal and moral obligations. We do not discriminate against any individuals or groups. Victimisation, bullying or harassment is not tolerated. We comply with the Equality Act 2010, other relevant legislation, statutory codes and guidance.

We positively embrace and celebrate diversity and promote an inclusive culture in our role as an employer and a provider of homes and services. We acknowledge that everyone is different, and that people have different needs and perspectives. Each individual brings their own contribution, experience, skills and knowledge to make Solihull Community Housing a successful organisation.

This policy applies to everyone at SCH, including the Board and employees, apprentices, volunteers, residents, service users and external partners with whom we work, such as contractors, consultants, and other agencies.

5.0 Policy Detail

Minor adaptations to Council properties are funded from the Housing Revenue Account (revenue). Minor works are classed as those costing below £1,000. Non-standard' works will be considered on a case-by-case basis, determining whether they are eligible for minor works funding.

Examples of minor works can include:

- Ramps
- Handrails
- Grab rail
- Over bath shower
- Lever taps

In exceptional cases, minor works funding for works above £1,000 may be awarded depending on the circumstances and works required. Some 'non-standard' works such as 'deep cleans' and house clearances may be eligible for funding to enable the works to be carried out but may be subject to SCH's recharge process (i.e. the resident making a contribution of some or all of the costs).

5.2 Funding of Major Adaptations

For major adaptations to Council properties, funding within the Housing Revenue Account (capital) must be used, rather than using DFG funding, which is available to residents in the private sector. SCH will normally only fund major adaptations up to a maximum limit of £30,000, which has been determined by matching the maximum DFG award. In circumstances where the equipment and/or works are above the maximum limit, SCH will discuss the options on a case-by-case basis, such as re-housing, or increasing the available funding, having obtained the appropriate approval. Increasing the available funding will only be considered if no other suitable options are available.

If funding above this level is required, then this will be considered by the Assistant Director of Finance & Property Services on a case-by-case basis following a recommendation from the SCH Adaptations panel.

The budget for major adaptations is fixed annually within the envelope of capital funds available in that year. If demand exceeds the funding available, then to manage this budget, SCH will prioritise applications based upon Occupational Therapy priority criteria and chronological order. All adaptations are subject to budget availability.

Residents applying for major adaptations are not subject to means testing.

A customer may choose to contribute in relation to preferred choice options, for example, the choice of tiles and increased coverage of a tiled area. Any costs not funded by SCH must be in place prior to works commencing.

5.3 Eligibility criteria

The Council will normally only consider a request for adaptations within a Council property if the disabled person:

- Is the tenant, or a child who the tenant has responsibility for
  and
- Is permanently resident in the household (which will be substantiated through a residency check)
  and
- Has a disability as outlined above which has a significant long-term impact on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities in and around their home

Adaptations for children of parents with shared access arrangements will usually only be carried out at the property that is the child's main and principal home.

5.4 Declining adaptations referrals

Requests for major adaptations will not normally be approved where a Right-to-Buy application has been received. Residents in these cases will be signposted to the assistance available through the Council's DFG programme once they have bought their home. If the Right-to-Buy application is cancelled or withdrawn, applications for major adaptations may be reconsidered under this policy.

If the tenant has expressed the intention to move from the property, e.g. by way of transfer, mutual exchange or other method, SCH, under most circumstances, will not approve major adaptations at their current property. However, applications with exceptional circumstances may be considered on their individual merit.

Adaptations will not normally be approved where the customer has been served with a

Notice Seeking Possession, for any reason. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the SCH Adaptations Panel and will consider individual circumstances. The customer will receive additional support and it may be necessary to look to move to more affordable or more suitable accommodation.

Potential adaptations for a property that is under or over occupied will be referred to the SCH Adaptations Panel

6.0 What adaptations may be available?

The needs of a disabled person, as assessed by the Solihull Council Occupational Therapy Service, will form the basis of any adaptation request and must meet one of the following

needs, based on the criteria outlined in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 which defines DFG adaptations:

i. Provide access in or out of their home.
ii. Provide access to a suitable, toilet, wash hand basin and bath or shower facility.
iii. Provide access to a room useable for sleeping.
iv. Enable them to prepare and cook food.
v. Make the home safe for them or someone living with them.
vi. Provide access to their main family living room.
vii. Improve the heating system if it does not meet their needs.
viii. Alteration of the means of access to or control of lighting, heating or power within the home (i.e. moving or adjusting switches)
ix. Enable them to move around their home to care for someone who normally lives with them.
x. Provide access to the garden.

Any adaptations must be deemed ‘necessary’ and ‘appropriate’ to meet the needs of the disabled person.

Major adaptations are works and/or equipment that cost over £1,000 and could include:

- Level access showers
- Large ramps
- Door widening
- Stairlifts
- Through-floor Lifts
- Step-lifts
- Hoists
- Structural alterations

8.0 What adaptations are unlikely to be available

The following are examples of adaptations that will not normally be funded, although cases will be appraised on individual merit:

- Adaptations for the storage of mobility scooters, unless the scooter has been prescribed by the Wheelchair Service
- Adaptations to enable mobility scooter access and storage, unless the scooter has been prescribed by the Wheelchair Service
- General repairs and maintenance that are the responsibility of the tenant, including garden fences and paving/patio
- Certain pieces of non-specialist fixtures, equipment and appliances may not be

classed as aids and adaptations. In general, this applies where the fixture/equipment/appliance has the same use for another occupant who is not disabled. For example, ovens and hobs and other appliances forming part of an adapted kitchen. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis and if provided, would be gifted to the tenant upon completion of the adaptation.

9.0 The application process

9.1 OT Assessment

If a customer believes that they require adaptations to their home, then the initial assessment of needs would be completed by Solihull Council Community OT Services. Please contact Adult Social Care on 0121 704 8007 or email ccadults@solihull.gov.uk to request an assessment. If this assessment determines that major adaptations are required, then the OT Service will send their recommendations through to the Aids and Adaptations Team for processing.

Whilst residents have the right to utilise a state registered independent OT (Royal College of Occupational Therapy can provide information) any costs incurred will not be funded by SCH or SMBC and SCH will still consult with Solihull Council's Social Care Service to assess whether adaptations are necessary and appropriate.

9.2 Initial SCH assessment

Once a referral is received the SCH Aids and Adaptations Team will acknowledge receipt to the customer and assess eligibility for assistance, including completing internal checks regarding Right-to-Buy applications and registration regarding any possible move.

Having established that a customer is eligible for assistance, there are several factors to be considered when assessing whether it is necessary and appropriate or reasonable and practicable to undertake major adaptations in a home. A list of the major areas for consideration when making this decision is given in Appendix A.

There may be some properties which are non-adaptable to the customer's needs, due to construction type or location. Where this is the case, SCH may have to instruct a feasibility study to establish the practicality of the adaptation.

The initial review of the referral/application will determine whether:

- The property is currently under or over-occupied or will become under or over-occupied if the requested adaptations are undertaken.
  And/or
- The estimated cost of adapting the property is £30,000 or above.

If either of the above apply, then the case will be referred for a full options appraisal to the SCH Aids and Adaptations Panel for further review. A full options appraisal will consider whether the work should go ahead or whether an alternative solution can be found which will continue to meet the essential needs of the customer and is in the best interests of the customer. Consideration will be given to whether any extensive adaptation work would:

- Be the best use of stock.
  Or
- Negatively affect the potential to let the property in future.
  Or
- Prove to be prohibitively expensive.

If the SCH Aids & Adaptations Panel agree that the adaptation is necessary and appropriate, the application will be sent to the Assistant Director of Finance and Property Services for a

final decision on funding the work. The customer will be advised in writing regarding whether their application will proceed, or if it is refused their alternative options will be outlined for them.

9.3 Designing the adaptation

Once an adaptation has been agreed in principle it will be allocated to a Contracts Officer within the Aids and Adaptations Team who will manage the scheme from design through to completion. The Contracts Officer will also be the customer's main contact point within SCH for any queries during their adaptation.

The adaptation will be designed, based upon the OT recommendations, and OT approval of the design will be obtained. The customer will also be given the opportunity to comment on the design and request any additional items they may wish to self-fund at this stage.

A summary of the scope of works which may be included in a major adaptation is included at Appendix C.

9.4 Completing the adaptation

SCH has a framework contract in place to deliver aids and adaptations and works, once agreed, will be awarded to one of these contractors.

Once funding has been awarded, contractors are required to provide a start date and complete works within 8 weeks of 'contract award' for most adaptations. Complex or works of a larger scale may be subject to different timescales which will be advised at the time.

Contractors will be required to adhere to the Contractors' Code of Conduct as set out in the SCH Adaptations Framework Agreement.

Once adaptations have been completed SCH will inspect all (100%) works valued at or over £750 for quality and value for money. Any customer concerns regarding the quality of other adaptations completed in their homes will also trigger an inspection.

10.0 SCH Adaptations Panel

The SCH Adaptations panel consists of officers and managers from both Property and Landlord Services and will include representation from the Occupational Therapy Service at Solihull Council. The panel's remit is to review and discuss complex projects and complaint cases as well as those where costs exceed available funding. A copy of the panel's terms of reference is included as Appendix B.

11.0 Alternative Options

Other options will always be considered before extensive major adaptations are carried out to a property. These options include:

- the possibility of better use of space within the existing footprint of the property, for example utilising a second reception room/dining room/integral garage. The property is underoccupied and a move to a smaller property that can meet the essential needs of the tenant is
- a move to a more suitable property that would resolve the need for adaptations and present a better long-term solution for the applicant.

For all requests for major adaptations, SCH will discuss with the customer the option of a transfer to alternative accommodation that better meets the needs of the disabled person. This could include:

- arranging a suitable alternative within SCH stock, for which a priority medical banding may be given; or
- housing with another social housing provider.

Examples of why this may be considered are where:

- A vacant property which is already suitably adapted to meet the essential needs of the customer can be identified.
- A vacant property which is more suitable to be adapted to meet the essential needs of the customer can be identified.
- An extension can be avoided by a move to a larger property.
- The current property is not suitable for a particular adaptation.
- Adaptations to a property may reduce its potential to be let in the future.

Where it is considered that a move to other suitable accommodation would be possible and/or the best solution, a priority banding may be given to the customer to enable them to move more quickly.

If suitable accommodation is available the customer would be expected to accept the alternative property, where reasonable in consideration of the customer's circumstances.

Once an offer has been accepted on an alternative property, the customer will be expected to take up the tenancy and move into this property as soon as is practical. If a customer refuses two (2) offers of alternative accommodation considered to reasonably meet their needs, SCH may refuse to undertake the requested adaptation to their current property. Under such circumstances, SCH will discuss with the customer the options available.

In cases where rehousing is being looked at as the approved/preferred option, then this must be possible within a reasonable timescale (based on an assessment of risk and availability of accommodation). If it is not possible to find suitable alternative accommodation within a reasonable time, adaptations to the existing property or another property will be considered.

Where the adaptation is considered by SCH as not viable at the current property, having taken all factors into consideration, SCH will offer and discuss the alternative options with the customer. If the customer refuses to take up any of those options, SCH will refuse to undertake the requested adaptation. The customer will be notified of this decision in writing.

12.0 Adaptations to Common Parts/ Communal Access

Adaptations to common parts and communal areas, for example a shared access path, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. This will consider the health, safety and needs of all the affected occupants as well as the local area needs, and the most appropriate funding agreed where necessary.

Permission will always be sought by SCH where an adaptation encroaches on a boundary, property or land not owned by the Council. An example of this would be where ramping is required to a shared access.

13.0 Installing own adaptations – Permissions

In some circumstances, residents may wish to be supported to install their own aids and adaptations. Under these circumstances, the customer will be responsible for funding the cost of purchase and installation themselves. SCH would need to give the customer permission in writing, as outlined in the Tenancy Agreement and Tenancy Management Policy.

Residents installing their own adaptation through the Tenant Improvement process will

source their own contracts and SCH will have no on-going maintenance responsibility for any of the works completed, nor will it be involved in any issues with a contractor whilst works are on site. NIC Certification must be provided to SCH for any electrical alterations or works.

At the end of the tenancy, residents will be required to remove their own installed adaptations and make good any damage to the property. Alternatively, if SCH agrees to take responsibility for the alterations at the end of a tenancy, the customer will need to agree to sign over ownership.

The amount of rent charged will not be affected by privately funded adaptations.

14.0 Will adaptations change the rental value of a property?

A major adaptation may make significant changes to the size and proportions of the property. An example of this may be where an extension has increased the number of bedrooms/bathrooms or available living space. Other conversions may reduce the number of rooms and therefore also impact on the attributes of the property. In such cases, SCH may re-evaluate the rental value of the property, in line with the rent setting procedures and the new rent would apply having given the appropriate notice period as set out in the tenancy agreement.

15.0 Maintenance and Servicing

On re-let of any adapted property there will be a routine inspection and maintenance undertaken of the aids and adaptations.

Certain aids and adaptations will be subject to agreed service and maintenance programmes. This generally applies to large pieces of equipment including stair-lifts, through floor lifts, step lifts, wash/dry toilets, and hoists.

Residents will be expected to allow reasonable access to enable servicing and maintenance of aids and adaptations. Should this not be permitted, residents may be liable for the cost of any deterioration or fault which is attributed to the inability to perform the necessary servicing and maintenance. Residents may also be liable for charges in the case of inappropriate call-outs or aborted pre-arranged visits.

Where an adaptation requires on-going servicing, SCH may add a service charge to cover the costs of maintenance.

Maintenance/repairs of major adaptations which involve building works, e.g. level access showers, will be undertaken as responsive repairs after an initial 12 month warranty period.

16.0 Making best use of SCH stock

SCH has a commitment to make best use of existing adaptations installed in properties. SCH will maintain records of adaptations installed to enable the appropriate matching of properties against residents' needs. The allocation of properties will be based on the criteria set out in the current Allocations Policy.

16.1 Direct/ Discretionary Lets

If a property becomes void that has extensive or specific adaptations, the decision may be made to allocate the property as a discretionary/direct let. This will be based upon review and recommendation by the Senior Housing Occupational Therapist and at the discretion of the appropriate SCH Manager.

SCH will hold a list of applicants who require extensive or specific adaptations and/or whose current home is unable to be adapted to meet their needs, and information about all stock which has been extensively adapted.

16.2 Letting adapted properties

Adapted properties that become available will be offered to those with matching needs or similar needs. If this is not possible within a reasonable timescale, based on an individual property option appraisal, then properties may be offered to applicants without a need for the adaptations.

If a customer no longer requiring adaptations would prefer to move from an adapted property to an un-adapted home, SCH will consider this if it has someone else who needs that type of adapted home.

Future tenants must accept the adapted property 'as is' unless the new tenant's assessed needs require additional special requirements.

Where the adaptation is preventing the property from being re-let, i.e. in the situation of a long-term void, after a certain length of time SCH may consider removing the adaptation. Each property will be considered on a case-by-case basis with input and advice from relevant officers.

16.3 Financial assistance toward moving into a suitably adapted home

Where residents take up the option to transfer to alternative accommodation that better suits their needs, enabling the adaptation to be installed in a more suitable way, which offers better value for money and/or use of stock then SCH may offer financial assistance to cover relocation expenses as part of the adaptations package. Further details of this package can be found in Appendix E.

16.4 Adapting vacant properties

If SCH is considering offering a customer a vacant un-adapted or partially adapted property requiring adaptations or further adaptations, council officers, including the Housing OT team and a Contracts Officer from the Aids and Adaptations team will firstly assess the suitability of the property to meet the resident's assessed essential needs.

SCH reserves the right to withdraw an offer of accommodation if the property is not deemed suitable at this inspection. The customer will be advised regarding their housing options.

If major adaptations are required and the property is deemed suitable, some or all the adaptation work may be carried out as a priority where possible and practical, to minimise void times.

The customer will be expected to take up the tenancy as soon as is practical. If the customer can live in the property whilst awaiting some or all the adaptation work, they will be expected to do so. If minor adaptations are required, the customer will be expected to take up the tenancy prior to the adaptations being carried out.

Upon completion of works the customer will be expected to transfer from their current property and take up a tenancy in the newly adapted property. Failure to take up an adapted property offer once works have commenced will be deemed a refusal of a reasonable offer and this will affect any future applications they make for aids and adaptations and SCH may look to recoup any monies spent.

Those residents that are not existing Council tenants will be advised that failure to take up an adapted property offer once works have commenced will be deemed a refusal of a

reasonable offer. This will affect any future applications they make for re-housing or aids and adaptations, as detailed in the Allocations Policy, and SCH may look to recoup any monies spent.

16.5 Future occupation and successive applications

Once major adaptations have been completed at a property it is expected that the customer requiring the adaptation will continue to live at the address, unless circumstances do not allow this (for example, no longer able to use the property due to a worsening medical condition and further adaptations are not possible).

If a customer applied to be re-housed, unless their circumstances had changed, they would normally be considered to be adequately housed.

If they then chose to move to an un-adapted/unsuitable property, any application for adaptations to that property may be refused.

Where significant work has taken place at a property and the customer requiring the adaptation(s) dies or is unable to remain at the property and permanently resides elsewhere, the remaining family members may be asked to consider moving to alternative accommodation to allow the adapted property to be let to a disabled person. Similarly, where the disabled person remains after death of a partner in a joint tenancy, the disabled person may be asked to consider moving to alternative adapted accommodation if, for example, the property is under-occupied.

16.6 Removal of aids and adaptations

An aid or adaptation to a property that has been HRA funded is owned by the Council and must not be removed by the customer during or at the end of their tenancy. If a customer removes an adaptation without the proper approval, then they will be recharged.

In circumstances where an aid or adaptation is no longer required, SCH will consider removing it if it may be used in another home. Otherwise, it will be left in place.

If an aid or adaptation is no longer working and beyond reasonable repair, then approval will be given for it to be removed following a reassessment of need.

SCH will not normally remove structural adaptations to a property, for example permanent ramping, widened doors, level access showers.

17.0 Financial Constraints

The budget for major adaptations is an annually agreed capital budget and forms part of the Capital Investment Programme. All awards are subject to available budget.

18.0 Performance Management

Processes and procedures are in place to ensure that the service delivered will be efficient and cost effective and that residents' future needs can be met, ensuring they are able to live more independently, improving their day-to-day quality of life in and around the home.

Performance indicators are set and reviewed, with specific, clear and attainable targets to ensure that the service is delivered effectively and in a timely manner for individuals.

19.0 Appeals and Complaints

If a customer is dissatisfied with any decision made about their application, they have the right to request a review.

Reviews will be carried out by a relevant service manager from within SCH and that review considered by the Aids and Adaptations Panel.

If a customer is not satisfied with the review decision or an Aids and Adaptations Panel decision, they may register a complaint through the council formal Complaints Procedure. Residents who want to make a general complaint or comment about the adaptations process can also use this procedure. Details are available online.

Data Protection

The Council and SCH will use and keep some personal data, including sensitive personal data, for certain specified purposes including to process requests for and confirm eligibility for adaptations.

A copy of the SCH Data Processing Notice can be found here.

Appendix A - Considerations

Factors taken into consideration when assessing whether a major adaptation is necessary, appropriate, reasonable and practicable to undertake (this list is not exhaustive):

- The age and condition of the property.
- Existing adaptations at the property.
- Cost of adaptations necessary to make the property suitable.
- Length of time the adaptation will take and incumbent void rent loss.
- Whether the property will meet the long-term needs of the disabled person.
- Property constraints in terms of its adaptability.
- Architectural and structural characteristics of the dwelling, some of which may render certain types of adaptation inappropriate, for example properties with narrow doors, stairways and passages, steep flight of steps.
- Property type and demand.
- Availability of more suitable alternative accommodation.
- Availability of the disabled person's existing support network and carers.
- Current occupancy of a property, for example is it under-occupied.
- Any competing needs of different members of the family which cannot be met in that particular home.
- Whether adaptations affect the amenity of the area for other residents
- Where works would require planning permission or building regulation approval which has not been, or would not be, granted.
- Where the council is taking possession proceedings against the customer for example, for rent arrears or anti-social behaviour.
- Whether adaptations make the best use of the council's housing stock and whether the adaptation affects the future let ability of a property.
- Whether it is a ground floor in a block of flats.

Appendix B –SCH Adaptations Panel Terms of Reference

1.0 Purpose

1.1 To review complex aids and adaptation referrals received from Solihull Community Occupational Therapy Service.

1.2 To ensure the aids and adaptations budget is used transparently and effectively to adapt suitable homes.

1.3 To ensure decisions are informed and in line with the SCH Adaptations Policy.

1.4 To make recommendations about potential adaptations referred to the Panel in line with the Asset Management Strategy.

2.0 Aims & Objectives

2.1 To identify areas of responsibility with regards to the property and customer aspects of each project.

2.2 To review each referred case on its individual merits and make recommendations from the findings.

2.3 To investigate alternative options with regards to suitable accommodations or property.

2.4 To ensure agreed works are progressed and delivered within an appropriate timescale.

2.5 To identify any overlapping works between the voids team and aids and adaptations teams and decide upon responsibility to undertake these works.

2.6 To share information between relevant departments to ensure the most appropriate outcome for referred residents and SCH.

3.0 Valuing Diversity

3.1 The SCH AP shall promote equal opportunities and value diversity, and work for good relations amongst all tenants, specifically prohibiting any conduct that discriminates or harasses on the ground of race, gender reassignment, age, sexuality, disability and religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sex or sexual orientation.

4.0 Confidentiality

4.1 The SCH AP members or attendees must not pass any information gained through their involvement with the SCH AP to a third party without approval from Solihull Community Housing. All information should be regarded as confidential within the SCH AP members and attendees.

5.0 Membership

5.1 Members of the group

Attendee	Head of Service/Service Manager (chair)
	Aids and Adaptations Manager
	Senior Housing OT
	Tenancy Sustainment Team Leader & Tenancy Sustainment Manager
	Capital Investment Manager
Attendees by invitation	Neighbourhood Services
	Housing Options
	Income Collection Team
	Referring Community OTs
	Health and social care professionals

5.2 Other representatives may be invited to the SCH AP by the members where relevant.

5.3 Invitations will be forwarded on an ad hoc basis to Community Occupational Therapists whose cases are due to be reviewed.

6.0 Officers of the SCH AP

6.1 The Head of Service/Service Manager will chair all meetings and conduct the business of the SCHAP. In the absence of the lead officer the Aids & Adaptations Manager will chair the meetings.

6.2 The Aids and Adaptations Manager will draw up an agenda and agree the reports for each meeting.

7.0 Administrative Support

7.1 The Adaptations administrators will be responsible for arranging and administering all meetings, supporting the development of SCH AP reports and assisting the Panel with obtaining information and producing reports/plans.

7.2 Agendas and items for consideration will be sent out 5 working days in advance of meetings, where possible, and SCH AP members can put forward agenda items where appropriate.

7.3 The minutes of the SCH AP shall be available 10 working days after the meeting for members of the Panel.

8.0 Meetings

8.1 The SCH AP shall schedule meetings monthly to ensure all cases are reviewed.

8.2 Cases that require an immediate review may be circulated via email for everyone to comment and the action should be included in the minutes at the next SCH AP meeting.

8.3 Members of the SCH AP must show commitment to the group and endeavour to attend all meetings or ask another relevant team member to stand in.

9.0 Code of Conduct

9.1 It is a condition of the membership of SCH AP that members at all time conduct themselves in a reasonable manner, at meetings or in premises used by the Panel.

Appendix C – Scope of Works Summary

This appendix is not intended to be a technical specification for works. It is intended to outline the scope of works which will be carried out when adaptations are completed in a property.

All works will receive a technical specification, which will be issued to the contractor and discussed with the customer.

All Adaptations - Decoration

Where walls are disturbed due to adaptation works, all disturbed areas will be re-plastered (if necessary) and emulsion and all woodwork to that wall finished in gloss paint.

All new walls and woodwork will be decorated.

Additional decoration may be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on the level of disturbance to an area.

Level Access Showers (LAS)

- All walls within the shower area will be fully tiled from floor to ceiling; all ceilings will be decorated with emulsion and all woodwork will receive undercoat and gloss paint finish. Tiles will be as specified by SCH but the customer may choose their own tiles on agreeing to pay any difference in cost.
- All toilet cisterns/pans and wash hand basins will be replaced as part of a LAS installation.
- All shower units will be Triton thermostatically controlled care showers, suitable for use by disabled people.
- All LAS will include a sealed light fitting and new extractor fan of appropriate extraction capacity.
- All LAS will include non-slip flooring to a minimum Pendulum Test Value (PTV) rating of equal to or greater than 36, which will be heat-sealed and in a customer's colour choice.
- A minimum of two grab rails will be fitted in all LAS adaptations.

Ramps

- Ramp installations will always be a minimum of 1:12 gradient – or greater if advised this is necessary by the OT. No ramps will be installed that cannot meet this gradient.
- All ramps will be a minimum of 1000mm wide (upstand inside edge to inside edge)
- All ramps will include the necessary platforms at the top, and throughout to comply with Building Regulations and provide adequate turning circles. All turning circles will be a minimum of 1.5m unless advised otherwise by the OT.
- Ramps may be either permanent concrete/slab construction or modular depending on assessment and circumstance. Each ramp will be considered individually regarding the most appropriate design and construction.
- All ramps will be fitted with appropriate galvanised handrails.

New doors

- All new external doors will be low threshold.
- All new internal and external doors will be a minimum of 838mm clear opening width, wider if necessary and advised by the OT.

Appendix D – Consultation

Three staff and stakeholder consultation events were planned with attendance levels meaning that two took place in July 2022.

One Resident Engagement Workshop was held organised by the Resident Engagement team, also in late July. The resident workshop was attended by 3 residents and a draft was shared with a wider number of tenant VIP members for further comment.

Attendees took part in workshop discussions regarding the policy and changes and their recommendations were incorporated into the final draft. A list of Staff/Stakeholder attendees is given below:

Name	**Department/Organisation**
John Pitcher	SMBC Housing Policy & Strategy
Becci Youlden	SCH Customer Experience Manager
Anne Wells	Senior Housing OT A&A Team
Jill Dunlevy	SCH Customer Engagement
Verity Sayers	Housing Options
Judith Cook	SMBC Contract, Grants Project Officer
Kim Holmes	SCH Tenancy Sustainment Manager
Martyn Sargeant	SCH Executive Director
Alan Stokes	Caseworker A&A Team
Tina Keen	SCH Neighbourhood Services
Peter Budge	SMBC Adult Social Care
Amy Alvarez	SMBC Adult Social Care
	3 SCH Residents

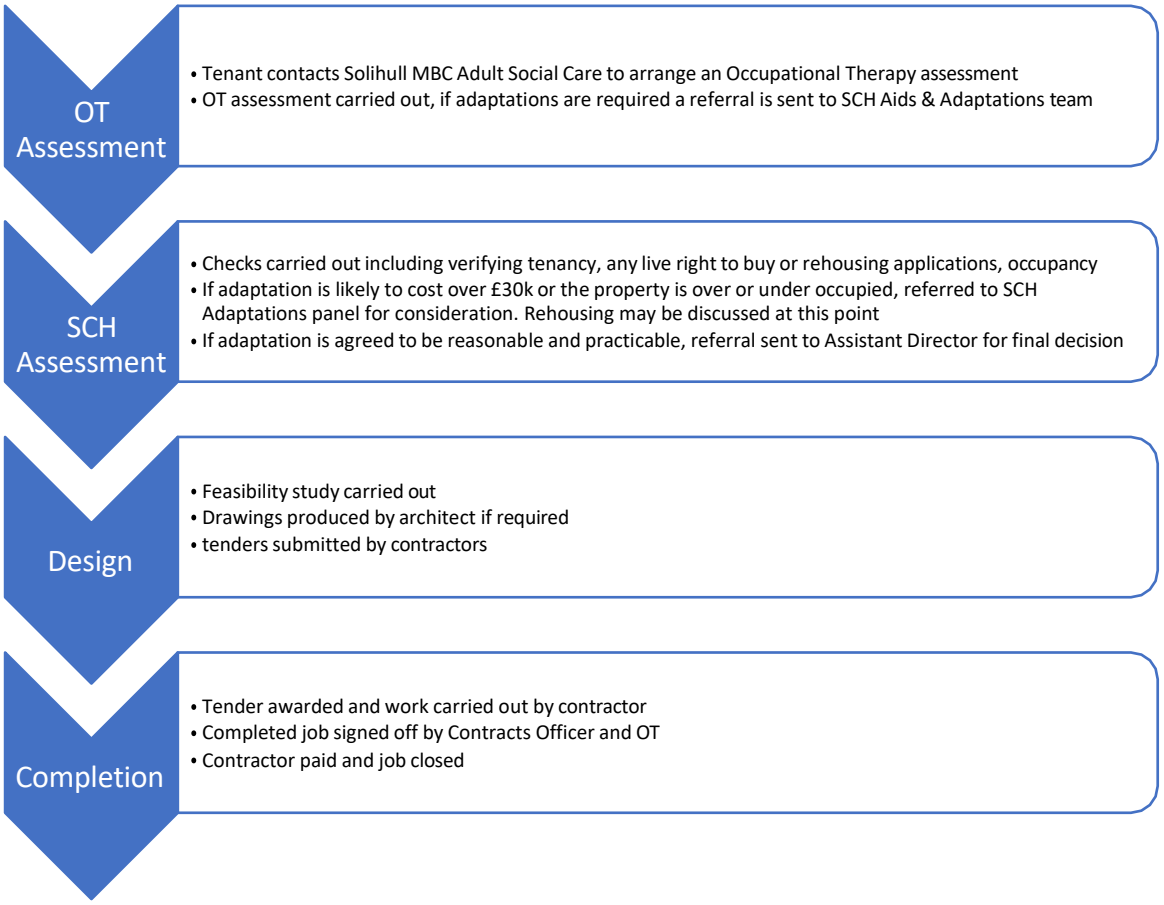
Appendix E – Relocation Offer

Where a property is unable or unsuitable for adaptation that meets the identified needs of the resident then SCH may offer relocation support through this policy. Any resident applying for this support must have been assessed as needing an adaptation through the Community Occupational Therapy Service and the property deemed as unsuitable for adaptation to meet those needs by the Aids and Adaptations team of SCH.

This support is distinct, separate and in addition to the 'downsizing incentive' that is offered through the Housing Allocations team.

The relocation offer from the Aids and Adaptations Service will include:

- A 'full pack and move service' between the 2 properties.
- Storage for 1 month for any items of furniture that will not fit into the new property (if downsizing) to enable time for disposal by the resident. Any items not disposed of within 1 month will either be disposed of, or the resident charged for storage.

The support will be managed by the Aids and Adaptations team and approved by the SCH Adaptations Panel up to a maximum combined value for the two grants of £3,500 per application.

Appendix F – Process Diagram