

**HALTON HOUSING TRUST**

**SERVICES FOR ELDERLY AND  
DISABLED RESIDENTS AND THOSE WITH  
SPECIAL NEEDS**

*Date due for Review :*

**Introduction**

Halton Housing Trust (the Trust) will always take into account the specific needs of the different groups of its residents when considering the range and quality of the services it provides. The Trust fully appreciates the need for a comprehensive policy for its services to elderly and disabled residents and those with special needs.

In implementing this policy, the Trust will have due regard to the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Code – in particular, the relevant parts of Sections 3.5 and 3.6.

This policy is aimed towards helping and assisting the following client groups :-

**Elderly People**

Tenants of sheltered accommodation and those of pensionable age occupying general needs accommodation.

**Disabled People**

Tenants or members of their family normally resident with them who are registered disabled. This will also extend to tenants who whilst not registered disabled can provide acceptable evidence of reduced capacity that adversely affects their ability to maintain or live comfortably in their own home.

**People with Special Needs**

Tenants with special needs will include those who are vulnerable through dependency on others, those with learning difficulties, those with mental health problems or mental illness, some young mothers and some young single people.

## **Policy Statement**

The Trust is committed to achieving the highest possible standard of service for its elderly and disabled residents and those with special needs.

Wherever possible the Trust will try to ensure that people can remain in their own home, if this is the client's preference. Where this is not practical within a reasonable cost, the Trust will look to work closely with the client to rehouse them into more suitable accommodation. To facilitate the Trust making the best use of its stock and limited resources, a database of all adapted properties, together with those in need of them, will be maintained. In some cases this may even involve looking for assistance from other housing associations in the area, where suitable accommodation is either not managed by the Trust or is not available.

This policy is intended to be read in the context of Halton Borough Council's strategy in relation to social care provision, and in particular the commissioning strategies within Social Services. The management and development of these services will reflect national social care strategy.

## **Implementation.**

In order to successfully implement this policy, the Trust will focus on the following key areas:-

### **Identification of Need.**

At a strategic level, the Trust will look to work pro-actively and in co-operation with other agencies and service providers in identifying need. This will include Halton Borough Council's Social Services department and Supporting People team, Health Service providers and the Voluntary Sector. The Trust would see the provision of new schemes as a suitable area for expanding its services in the Borough.

In individual cases, officers will be trained to be vigilant and responsive in this area and will be expected to involve the above and others as necessary. This could include the client's family and friends or any other representatives (such as Councillors and MPs) who can assist in identifying need.

### **Supported Housing for the Elderly**

The Trust will continue to provide supported housing for elderly people who live in sheltered housing schemes. Scheme Managers will be retained in the sheltered housing schemes where they were prior to transfer from the Council. Scheme Managers will receive regular training and support and will be encouraged to undertake the recognised Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) qualification.

The Trust will work in close consultation with tenants to carry out significant repair and improvement works to these schemes to ensure that their homes and facilities meet modern standards. The Trust will also look to improve the services that are available in each of the sheltered schemes.

This will be done by:-

- consulting tenants at each sheltered scheme to agree service specifications including improved landscape maintenance;
- working with other agencies to provide improved care, health and leisure services;
- prioritising day-to-day repairs for vulnerable tenants, particularly where this impacts on their health;
- the introduction of a generic handy-person service as part of the Repairs Service to assist both vulnerable and elderly tenants.

An emergency call service – ‘Lifeline’ - will continue to be provided for elderly and/or vulnerable tenants to ensure 24 hour cover is maintained.

#### Aids and Adaptations.

The Trust believes that everything within reason should be done to support people with disabilities within the community. The Trust’s Business Plan will ensure that where possible and practical, the provision of suitable aids and adaptations for people with disabilities will continue to be carried out. The Trust is committed to maintaining the same level of investment for the provision of adaptations that was historically provided by Halton Borough Council.

The Trust will seek to make the best use of facilities already in place throughout its housing stock. Comprehensive records will be maintained of all dwellings that have major or minor adaptations. This will allow the Trust to ensure that the equipment it has installed can be maintained properly and will also ensure that adapted properties are recognised when they become vacant and can be relet to the most appropriate applicants.

Where new adaptation work is to be considered by the Trust to meet the needs of an applicant, this will be dealt with in one of the following ways, depending on the extent of the work required :-

#### 1) Major Adaptation Works

The Trust will consider the need for major adaptations (i.e. anything above £500 in value) in conjunction with the respective tenants, Health Services and Social Services, and in particular an Occupational Therapist. When considering individual requests the Trust will consider all options. A transfer to more suitable property may be considered if this is thought to be the best way of dealing with the assessed need. The wishes of the tenant in this regard and in particular their willingness to move and the practicalities of such a move will always be taken into consideration.

Given that major adaptations are costly they will inevitably be subject to funding constraints.

The Trust will look to assess each application with the assistance of an Occupational Therapist . The Trust will rely upon the assessment services provided by the Occupational Therapist to guide the prioritising of this service. Work would then be programmed by means of a prioritised list. Individual applicants will be advised of their position on the list, giving an indication of how long they are likely to wait. This process will be ongoing and the adaptations list will be updated continuously as a result.

## 2) Minor Adaptations

Minor adaptations (anything below £500 in value) such as grab rails, ramps and door alterations will be progressed as rapidly as possible provided that the need has been confirmed by an Occupational Therapist.

## Services for People with Mental Health Needs and Those with Learning Difficulties

The Trust recognises that people with mental health needs and those with learning difficulties in the community are potentially vulnerable. It will ensure that it plays its part in any package of support, including floating support, that might be deemed necessary, in consultation with Social Services, the Health Service or any appropriate Voluntary Agencies. The Trust will also ensure that staff awareness training is provided for appropriate officers.

The Trust will co-operate and work closely with appropriate agencies to further develop its services to people with mental health needs and to consider the possibility of providing supported housing.

## Services for Young People who are Vulnerable

Many young people particularly young mothers and people leaving care can be vulnerable. The Trust is keen to play its part in providing services and support for such young people. It will work closely with Halton BC and other housing associations active in the area to develop a Borough-wide housing strategy for younger people.

## Decorations

The Trust will provide help to elderly tenants to decorate the inside of their homes via its Assisted Decoration Scheme.

Tenants can apply if :-

- their home is occupied by elderly persons (over 60 years old) who live on their own and are unable to carry out the work themselves or have no-one living with them who can do the work for them; and
- they provide the materials.

A limited budget may also be made available for other tenants who face particular difficulties. This will be at the appropriate officer's discretion if it is

felt that they have no support or any other means of doing the work for themselves.

Under the scheme tenants can have up to 3 rooms decorated in any 6 year period.

Experience has shown that there will be periods of high demand for the service. To try to help as many people as possible in these periods of high demand, the Trust will reserve the right to limit approval to any particular applicant to have either one or two rooms decorated. In addition to this, a request from a tenant to have the hall, stairs and landing decorated would count as two rooms. The applicant would still be able to apply for the remaining room(s) to be done later on in the same 6 year period.

Tenants will be asked to complete an application form and give details of their personal circumstances, to see if they qualified for the service. This is so that applications can be prioritised. Application forms will be available from any of the

Trust's local housing offices or could be posted out to the tenant. Help to complete the form will be offered to any tenant who requested it.

Full details of how the work is programmed are given in the Tenants Handbook.

### Garden Services

The Trust will consider providing a garden service for elderly and disabled tenants who would normally be responsible for maintaining the garden of their property but who are unable to carry out the work themselves.

The Trust will carry out the work at cost and/or will maintain an approved list of contractors who can carry out the work for tenants.

### Responsibility

The Deputy Chief Executive will be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy. This will include the training of relevant staff.

### Consultation

The Trust will consult on this policy, in accordance with its Tenant and Resident Involvement Policy, with :-

- Halton Borough Council;
- Halton Housing Community Voice;
- the Tenants and Residents' Panel;
- Trust tenants generally, including tenants and residents' groups and consultative forums;
- other housing associations in Halton;
- other appropriate statutory agencies and the voluntary sector.

### **Review**

The Trust's Board of Management will receive an annual report reviewing the effectiveness of this policy. This will analyse performance and activity in this area of work. In any review, consideration will be taken of current good practice, Best Value and national and local social care policies .

### **Associated Documents**

Equality and Diversity Policies  
Customer Care Policy  
Tenant and Resident Involvement Policy  
Tenants Handbook  
Halton BC Social Services' Commissioning Strategies