



DISABILITY EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

DECEMBER 2007 - 2010

SENTINEL HOUSING ASSOCIATION

DISABILITY EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2007-2010

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Sentinel is committed to equality and diversity for all and constantly works to ensure that it treats people with respect and delivers services appropriate to individual need.
- 1.2 We acknowledge that people with disabilities encounter barriers and are dedicated to helping remove these barriers, eliminate disability discrimination and promote positive attitudes towards our customers with disabilities.

2. Background

- 2.1 Along with other public bodies, the Housing Corporation (the regulator of housing associations), has a statutory public duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to promote disability equality. Through the regulatory framework, the Housing Corporation expects housing associations to develop disability equality action plans of their own.

3. Definition of Disability

- 3.1 In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act, a person has a disability if:

he or she has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- 3.2 “Impairment” covers physical or mental impairments – this includes sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing. The term “mental impairment” is intended to cover a wide range of impairments relating to mental functioning, including what are often known as learning disabilities.
- 3.3 A substantial adverse effect is something which is more than a minor or trivial effect. The requirement that an effect must be substantial reflects the general understanding of disability as a limitation going beyond the normal differences in ability which might exist among people.
- 3.4 A long-term effect is one which has lasted at least 12 months; where the total period for which it lasts is likely to be at least 12 months or which is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected.

3.5 The duty to promote disability equality requires the:

- Promotion of equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Elimination of discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act
- Elimination of harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encouragement of participation by disabled people in public life
- Taking account of disabled peoples' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

4. Sentinel's Disability Action Plan

4.1 Attached at Appendix A is our first specific Disability Action Plan, which has been drawn up following a disability equality impact assessment and the involvement of a number of our customers with disabilities at a Disability Awareness Event in November 2007. The Plan takes account of the needs of our customers with disabilities and incorporates actions to address these needs. Our Plan will be a means by which we continuously improve the services we offer to our customers with disabilities and the way in which we offer them by:

- making our services more inclusive and accessible;
- help remove barriers for disabled people; and
- encouraging participation of our customers with disabilities in public life.

4.2 We will review the implementation and monitoring of this Action Plan throughout its term and at least annually.

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THEME	ACTION	OUTCOME	BY	DATE/BY
1. Deliver services that are inclusive and accessible	1.1 Continue to ask for, capture and record information about our customers' disability profile, ensuring individual needs are flagged up on our system	Increase the number of households about whom we hold profile information and tailor our services to	CSM/HNS/ISM	Ongoing
	1.2 Review ways of ensuring/training front-line staff so that they can demonstrate a wide range of knowledge about how services can be adjusted to meet their needs	Increase staff awareness, customer service, inclusiveness and satisfaction	HRM/CSM/HNS/C&SM/HDAM	Oct 2008
	1.3 Review customer documentation to ensure customers with disabilities easily understand how services can be adjusted to meet their needs and contain no technical terms or jargon	Increase accessibility and inclusiveness of services offered	HNS/C&SM/CSM/HDAM	Commence May 2008
	1.4 Review methods of monitoring complaints, harassment, anti-social behaviour and repairs satisfaction to ensure results can be reported and appropriate action taken with regard to people with disabilities	Ensure customers with disabilities are treated fairly	HNS/CSM/HDAM/C&SM	Dec 2008
	1.5 Signpost access to various internal and external services and who to contact for support with regard to, for example, disability and carer allowances, assistance with completing forms	Increase inclusiveness and accessibility to services	HNS/C&SM/HDAM	April 2009
	1.6 Review meeting room and WC facilities at both offices, lift arrangements at Fleet and the ramp to the office in Basingstoke	Increase accessibility to/at our offices	Exec	June 2008

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<p>2. Improve accessibility and help remove barriers for customers with disabilities within homes and external environments</p>	<p>2.1 Continue with established asset management practices relating to inclusive design of homes</p>	<p>Increase the number of homes developed to Lifetime Homes Standard and within the Wheelchair Housing Design guide.</p>	<p>HDAM</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>2.2 Raise awareness of Communicare and Homecare services to residents and others who have particular needs</p>	<p>Help people with disabilities to retain their homes or tenancies</p>	<p>C&SM</p>	<p>April 2008</p>
	<p>2.3 Increase the involvement of customers with disabilities in the planning and understanding of the detail of aids and adaptations services, design issues, major repairs and refurbishments</p>	<p>Ensure services are inclusive and accessible and help remove barriers</p>	<p>HNS/HDAM</p>	<p>Dec 2008</p>
	<p>2.4 Produce clear guidance/simple information sheet setting out how customers with disabilities can apply for aids and adaptations</p>	<p>Improve accessibility, and awareness of services available</p>	<p>HNS/HDAM</p>	<p>Oct 2008</p>
	<p>2.5 Update and keep up to date asset management records with details of properties where adaptations have been carried out</p>	<p>Produce a comprehensive record of accessible housing for people with disabilities</p>	<p>HDAM</p>	<p>Commence April 2008</p>
	<p>2.6 Review the monitoring of Sentinel's adaptation services in terms of cost, quality, timeliness and customer satisfaction</p>	<p>Ensure customers with disabilities are treated fairly</p>	<p>HNS/HDAM</p>	<p>June 2009</p>
	<p>2.7 Review the use and policies on the re-allocation of properties which have aids and adaptations to persons with disabilities and the recycling of aids and adaptations</p>	<p>Ensure housing stock is used effectively for housing customers with disabilities</p>	<p>HNS</p>	<p>Commence Nov 2009</p>

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	2.8 Review and clarify our position on stair-lift installation, repair and replacement	Ensure consistency of approach for all customers	HNS/HDAM	June 2008
	2.9 Work with Local Authorities and campaign for better infrastructure, parking and transport to support our disabled customers	Improve accessibility and help remove barriers for customers	BD	Ongoing
	2.10 Explore the establishment of accessibility audits of our communities and include persons with disabilities in these and estate walkabouts	Improve accessibility and help remove barriers for customers	HNS	Commence June 2008
	2.11 Increase lobbying for an Accessible Housing Register with Local Authorities	Ensure housing stock is used effectively for housing customers with disabilities	BD	Commence Aug 2008
	2.12 Review accessibility of low cost home ownership schemes for people with disabilities and implement performance indicators for monitoring those housed and satisfaction rates	Ensure accessibility to homes for people with disabilities	SOM	Commence April 2008
	2.13 Consider the creation of a disabilities/welfare staff member as a single point of contact on all disability issues	Improve accessibility and co-ordination of services	HNS/CCIC	April 2009
3. Encourage participation and involvement of our customers with disabilities	<p>3.1 Develop, work with and encourage disabled customers to be more involved in resident involvement at Sentinel and in the communities it serves, including on the Board. Work with Local Authorities and groups (eg access groups, disability forums and voluntary organisations) to formalise and utilise links with groups helping people with disabilities in our communities; consider the formation of local focus groups.</p> <p>Work with others to help support customers with disabilities in more isolated rural areas and ways</p>	Increased participation and involvement	HNS/CCIC	<p>Commence April 2008</p> <p>April 2009</p>

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	of identifying community cohesion eg through the use of village halls for community focus events.			
	3.2 Identify methods of contact and feedback with customers with disabilities eg a section in the customers newsletter or separate publication; social activities for the elderly	Ensure services are inclusive and accessible	HNS/CCIC/C&SM/CM	April 2010
	3.3 Identify positive action to encourage people with disabilities to apply for employment posts at Sentinel	Encourage people with disabilities to apply for posts	HRM	Dec 2008

Definitions:

- BD - Business Director
- CCIC - Customer & Community Involvement Co-ordinator
- CSM - Customer Services Manager
- CM - Communications Manager
- C&SM - Care and Support Manager
- HDAM - Head of Development & Asset Management
- HNS - Head of Neighbourhood Services
- HRM - HR Manager
- ISM - Information Systems Manager
- SOM - Shared Ownership Manager