**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**

**SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

**SERVICE USERS ADVICE NOTE No 11**

**HALF STEPS**

This advice note is designed to assist service users / carers who are planning purchase or build of a half step.

**Introduction**

* The purpose of a half step is to reduce the height of an existing step, thereby reducing risk and effort.
* Portable half steps are available for indoor use (ie in a bathroom) or use by a doorway (internal or external).

 \*\*See SUAN no 1. National & County Retail Outlets

* Wooden Half Steps can be made to fit the doorway. For safe use these should be fixed to the ground.
* If the half step is in front of a door which opens outwards, the platform size will need to be increased and a grab rail may be required.
* Ensure the surface of a half step is both level and slip resistant.

**Half Step used with mobility equipment**

* For safety reasons the depth of the half step should be large enough to enable you to stand firmly on it with any mobility equipment. ( minimum depth 39.5” / 1mtre)

**Measurements**

Access before half step fitted

Access with half step fitted

* Height – a half step should be approximately half the height of the existing step.
* Width – ideally the half step should be as wide as the existing step.
* Depth – for an ambulant person without mobility equipment, the depth should measure 1½ times their foot length.

**Considerations**

* If the half step is only used occasionally in a particular position – ensure surface under it is even, again to maintain confidence and safety of user.
* If the half step is wooden and is to be left in situ on a permanent basis, it is preferable to fix it securely to maintain confidence and safety of user.

Space available

* Fixed half steps cannot be placed onto a public highway
* When building a half step make sure you do not block inspection covers, drains or others’ rights of way
* Check that you do not hinder access to other facilities, such as dustbins or side entrances**.**

Lighting

* Ensure that there is adequate lighting at all times. If necessary fit motion sensor lighting for night time use.
* If vision is at all impaired, define edges of step by painting a 50mm strip around the perimeter of the half step tread – in yellow or white.

Possible need for rails

* A grab rail may be needed by the door or, if a deep half step is provided for use with a walking frame or multiple half steps are required then a galvanised rail may be necessary.

 \*\* refer to Service User Advice Notes 9 and 10.

Durability

* If a wooden half step is used externally the general life expectancy of it is between 2-5 years when maintained regularly. The condition of the half step should be closely monitored.

**Kent Social Care, Health and Wellbeing CANNOT ACCEPT responsibility for any equipment purchased from private companies.**

 Additional information may be found at

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The Wenlock Business Centre

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[www.ricability.org.uk](http://www.ricability.org.uk) [www.product-reviews.org.uk](http://www.product-reviews.org.uk)

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