

WHA Adaptations Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document outlines Williamsburgh Housing Association's policy in relation to the assessment, delivery and management of the provision of adaptations.
- 1.2 Adaptations are works to existing accommodation to suit the requirements of individual tenants who have a physical disability or sensory impairment.
- 1.3 Research has shown that people with particular needs prefer to remain in their existing accommodation where possible, with adaptations added if needed. These adaptations can vary from adding a simple grab rail beside a bath to more extensive adaptations such as a new walk-in shower.
- 1.4 The Association is committed to meeting tenants' needs and to providing adaptations, where possible, so that tenants are able to enjoy independence, privacy and dignity.
- 1.5 As the adaptations process is a multi-agency process the Association believes that effective liaison and good working relationships across the whole network of agencies involved in adaptations is essential.
- 1.6 This policy document covers the following:
 - initial contact/referral
 - assessment and prioritisation
 - how the funding system works
 - timescales and performance outcomes
 - allocation of adapted property
 - maintenance and replacement of adaptations

Aims and Objectives

- 1.7 In relation to adaptations the objectives of the Association will be to:
 - i. advice tenants on how to access to the adaptations process
 - ii. improve the speed, efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery
 - iii. maximise the use of resources
 - iv. improve the provision of, and information on, homes which are suitable for disabled people

Best Practice Guidance

- 1.8 This policy document has been based on examples of best practice in particular, SFHA Information Note "Equipment and Adaptations" 2003, College of Occupational Therapists – "A practical Guide for Housing Associations" 2006, GWSF Briefing on "Funding for Housing Adaptations" 2011 and Scottish Government Guidance Note 2012/04 "Procedures for Funding of RSL Adaptations in 2012/13".

2. INITIAL CONTACT/REFERRALS

- 2.1 Where the initial approach comes from the tenant, the Association will offer assistance to the tenant to complete an Occupational Therapy Referral Form within 7 working days. If grant funding has been exhausted, the tenant should be advised if this will impact on the timescales to undertake the work.
- 2.2 Alternatively, the tenant may contact the local Social Work Services direct and arrange for an assessment to be carried out. The Association will provide full details of relevant contact persons and telephone numbers to assist tenants on request.

3. ASSESSMENT AND PRIORITISATION

- 3.1 The Occupational Therapist Section of Renfrewshire Council's Social Work Services Department has the responsibility for identifying and assessing the need for adaptations works in all instances.
- 3.2 The Occupational Therapist will complete an AD1 Referral Form which will clearly recommend the type of work required to meet the tenant's needs.
- 3.3 A flow chart demonstrating the Adaptations process is detailed in Appendix 1.

Liaison With Occupational Therapist Section

- 3.4 Good practice in this area clearly depends on mutual understanding and co-operation. To try and develop and improve working practices the Association will liaise with Occupational Therapist staff to discuss and address any matters of concern.

Joint Visits

- 3.5 Joint visits will be held with the Occupational Therapist where this is considered appropriate in terms of cost, complexity or both.
- 3.6 Joint visits will usually be held in cases involving anything more complex work, in order to provide clarity on the requirements.

Occupational Therapist Recommendations

- 3.7 The Association will endeavour to carry out adaptation work which meets the long-term needs of its residents. For example, an overbath shower may not be the most suitable option if the tenant's disability is such that a walk-in shower is likely to be needed in the relatively near future.

Refusal By Association to Carry Out Adaptation Work

- 3.8 The Association sometimes recognises that there may be situations where it is not considered appropriate to carry out some forms of adaptation work. For example:-
- where the location of the property (eg. three floors up in a tenement building) renders major work such as a wet floor installation inappropriate because the tenant is unlikely to find the flat accessible in the long-term.
 - where the tenant's needs are likely to change very soon.
 - where the tenant is, or wishes to be, on the transfer list for rehousing to a more appropriate property.
- 3.9 When such cases arise the Association will adopt a "case conference" approach where the tenant and any representative, the Occupational Therapist and housing association staff will meet to review the options. The Association recognises the very positive impact adaptation work can have on a tenant's quality of life and will therefore seek to arrive at a compromise solution to each situation wherever possible. Where the Association is unable to carry out the exact adaptation work specified by the Occupational Therapist the case will also be discussed by Association staff at their weekly Co-ordination meeting and details of the discussions recorded as part of the formal minute. Each set of circumstances will be considered on its own merit.
- 3.10 In cases where the Association is unable to reach a compromise solution and does not consider it appropriate to carry out adaptation work in a tenant's present accommodation the Association will award the tenant very high priority within its Transfer Policy which will enable the tenant to move to more suitable accommodation which will allow permanent adaptation work to be carried out with minimum further delay.
- 3.11 Should any tenant be unhappy with any decision made by the Association in relation to the adaptations process then he/she may appeal to the Maintenance Services Sub-Committee.

4. FUNDING SYSTEM

- 4.1 Grant Funding is provided by Scottish Government to enable housing associations to carry out adaptation work.
- 4.2 The Maintenance Manager/Officer will liaise with Housing Management, on the likely future need/demand for adaptations, as well as taking into account current and previous years' expenditure. The Association will then bid for adaptation funding as part of the Association's annual Strategy and Development Funding Plan.
- 4.3 The Maintenance Manager/Officer will regularly monitor the demand and expenditure on adaptations throughout the year. Where it is likely that additional grant will be needed an application should be made as soon as possible to Renfrewshire Council.
- 4.4 The Association will endeavor to keep tenants informed of their progress at all stages of the adaptations process.

5. WORK SPECIFICATIONS/QUALITY CONTROL

Managing the Process

- 5.1 The Maintenance Manager will be the person responsible for coordinating the day to day efforts of everyone engaged in delivering the adaptations service for our residents.
- 5.2 Development Officer will also be responsible for ensuring that Housing Association Grant (H.A.G.) is promptly and accurately claimed through Scottish Government's HARP system.

Work Specifications

- 5.3 To minimise administrative delays, the Association's Maintenance Officer will invite tenders which can cover a period of one to four years, for standard adaptations such as overbath/low profile showers.
- 5.4 Each contractor will then agree to carry out all similar adaptations for a fixed price and within the target timescales (any minor variation can be agreed on a job-by-job basis).

Performance Targets

- 5.5 The Association will endeavor to set timescale targets to cover the period from the tenant's initial enquiry to the completion of the work.
- 5.6 It is recognised, however, that such targets may not be easy to achieve as the Association is not in control of the assessment process nor of the funding availability.

Quality Control and Customer Satisfaction

- 5.7 The Association seeks to ensure that all its adaptation work and the manner in which it is carried out meets the highest possible standards.
- 5.8 All adaptation work will be post inspected by the Maintenance Officer to ensure it is done to a satisfactory standard. The Occupational Therapist will also be notified that the work is complete in order that he/she may also visit their client to ensure satisfaction with the work done.
- 5.9 In addition, all residents who get adaptation work carried out in their home will be asked to complete a Satisfaction Survey to ensure that they are satisfied with all aspects of the adaptations process and to seek their general comments on the subject.

6. ALLOCATION OF ADAPTED PROPERTY

- 6.1 The Association will ensure that its property records are updated promptly on completion of adaptation work.
- 6.2 The Association will endeavour to make best use of its adapted stock by allocating such properties to applicants who require the relevant adaptations.
- 6.3 Where appropriate the Association will ask the Occupational Therapist to advise on which applicants appear to be most suitable. If this is not possible the Association will at least obtain from the Occupational Therapist general advice on what sort of disability the property may be suitable for.

7. MAINTENANCE AND REPLACEMENT OF ADAPTATIONS

- 7.1 The Association will assume the cost of maintaining adaptations from its mainstream maintenance budget.
- 7.2 The replacement of adaptations, however, should normally be eligible for Stage III funding from Renfrewshire Council, subject to overall funding availability.

8. PROMOTING APPLICATIONS FOR ADAPTATIONS

- 8.1 The Association will publicise the availability of funds for adaptation work on a regular basis in its newsletter.

9. POLICY REVIEW

- 9.1 The Adaptations Policy will be reviewed and amended as necessary at least every five years.
- 9.2 It will be reviewed in the light of legislative changes, new policy/good practice guidance, the performance of the Association and the views of its tenants.
- 9.3 The targets relating to the timescales for service delivery will be reviewed and amended as appropriate on a regular basis.

**ADAPTATIONS PROCEDURES
FLOW CHART**

Appendix 1

