

DISABLED ADAPTATION POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2022



LANARKSHIRE
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD



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DISABLED ADAPTATION POLICY

(*Note Lanarkshire Housing Association hereinafter referred to as LHA)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Housing adaptations make an important contribution to supporting older people and disabled people to live safely, comfortably and independently at home. This policy confirms our commitment to supporting these individual's needs and recognises that alterations are seen as preventative measures in reducing emergency hospital admissions through falls and other accidents.
- 1.2 We work closely with local authorities and health professionals to ensure, where feasible, modifications to homes are provided which allow tenants to remain in their homes and enjoy independence, privacy and dignity.
- 1.3 This policy supports a 'person-centred' approach to assisting tenants remain in their own home for as long as possible. Adaptations are paid for by the Association but are subject to the availability of funding.

2.0 HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 – THE SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER (THE CHARTER)

- 2.1 In formulating this policy, LHA adopts the key aims and outcomes as defined in the Scottish Social Housing Charter (Charter) specifically:

The Scottish Social Housing Charter –

Charter Outcome 2 – Communication

'Social Landlords manage their business so that:

'tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides'.

We aim to ensure that tenants and customers find it easy to contact us by providing clear information in plain English and make it simple for customers to access information and understand our decisions and actions. Additionally, we wish to make it easy for customers to make complaints or provide feedback on services.

Charter Outcome 11: Access to Housing and Support: *Tenancy Sustainment*

Social landlords ensure that:

'Tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.'

The outcome covers how landlords can help tenants who may need support to maintain their tenancy. This includes tenants who may be at risk of falling into arrears with their rent, and tenants who may need their home adapted to cope with age, disability, or caring responsibilities.

3.0 POLICY AIMS

- 3.1 We aim to promote sustainable balanced communities, ensuring the social welfare of tenants, with community and individual support. Assistance should be available for people who wish to remain in their homes, through a range of social work, health and other support available locally to meet their needs.
- 3.2 We will ensure tenants get the information, advice and support needed to sustain their tenancy and staff will signpost tenants to available support from partner agencies where appropriate to their medical or mobility requirements.
- 3.3 We are committed to continuous improvement and good practice when approving, installing, funding, managing and maintaining adaptations in our properties.
- 3.4 We ensure that we apply value for money principles in the use of aids and adaptations funding to achieve the best outcomes for our tenants.
- 3.5 We manage LHA's stock effectively so that homes that are already adapted are made available to those who can make use of the adaptation.

4.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 4.1 Our Equality Policy positively promotes equal opportunities for all our customers, and this underpins all our policies, procedures and processes. This policy is compliant with the statutory and regulatory requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 and the Scottish Social Housing Charter.
- 4.2 We embrace diversity and aim to eliminate any direct or indirect discrimination that we encounter. We will treat every tenant and customer with respect, ensuring that their individual needs are recognised and they are treated fairly and have equal access to services.
- 4.3 We aim to ensure every customer receives an accessible and inclusive service to positively assist people from all sections of the community and

help them sustain their tenancies and live independently free from unlawful discrimination or harassment.

- 4.4 In supporting our equality commitment, we have adopted the 'Happy to Translate' service, which bridges communication gaps with service users who struggle to communicate in English.
- 4.5 We will ensure there is fair, open and equal access to adaptations. Tenants will be provided with advice and guidance in relation to applications for adaptations signposting them to the appropriate local authority department.
- 4.6 LHA recognise the social model of disability - disabled people face barriers that stop them from taking part in society in the same way as non-disabled people. This policy seeks, where possible, to remove the physical barriers preventing LHA tenants to fully and safely enjoy the use of their home.

5.0 CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING APPLICATIONS FOR DISABLED ADAPTATIONS

- 5.1 LHA accepts adaptation referrals from Occupational Therapists (OT) in both North and South Lanarkshire Council locality offices. These assessments are in a standardised format and scored by the OT following assessment of the applicants capability and risk.
- 5.2 The eligibility assessment for adaptations uses the O.T. priority points score and then the date of the referral (where there is more than one case with the same priority award). Where referrals are received for upper flats or houses, we will look at the tenants overall needs prior to approving the adaption.
- 5.3 The current assessment process categorises each referral into the following groups
 - **Critical (Priority 1)** – where serious harm or loss of life may occur
 - **Substantial (Priority 2)** – risk where harm may occur now or in the near future
 - **Moderate (Priority 3)** – risk where harm may occur if action is not taken in the longer term
 - **Low (Priority 4)** – disadvantage or impact of quality of life if needs are not met
- 5.4 A register of all referrals is maintained both for monitoring of expenditure against budget and for end of year reporting.
- 5.5 Where a property is unsuitable for adaptations, we will assess the tenants housing needs and discuss housing options available, making best use of our allocation policy.

6.0 TYPE OF ADAPTATIONS

- 6.1 Scottish Government, Housing and Regeneration guidance classifies adaptations in the following categories.

Stage 1

These are adaptations where design features that are not specific to a particular condition or individual and that are incorporated into the initial specification for the property prior to its construction or improvement.

Stage 2

Stage 2 adaptations are designed for properties to suit the particular requirements of the tenant to whom it has been allocated before, or close to practical completion of construction or improvement works. The original contractor may carry out these adaptations.

Stage 3

Stage 3 works are undertaken to adapt a property to suit the changing needs of the existing tenant, or of a new tenant, where these could not reasonably have been identified when the property was originally provided.

- 6.2 Assessment for adaptations will vary from simple grab rails and disabled parking spaces, which must be applied for using the relevant application form to walk in showers and ramps, which will be subject to an OT referral.

7.0 PROCUREMENT OF DISABLED ADAPTATIONS

- 7.1 LHA will ensure probity, quality and value for money in respect of procurement of disabled adaptations work, in compliance with our Property Services Policy.
- 7.2 Selection of contractor(s) for disabled adaptations work will be based on our contractor selection and procurement criteria, detailed within the Property Services Policy, with contractors appointment based on cost for a three yearly basis.
- 7.3 Contractor assessment will include quality testing and customer satisfaction, to ensure the service achieves our specified standards.

8.0 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

- 8.1 Tenants requesting adaptations can expect a high standard of service in line with all our repairs and maintenance services. Customer satisfaction surveys are carried out, to assess satisfaction with disabled adaptations, when the work is completed.

- 8.2 The outcome of the satisfaction surveys will be presented to our Housing Services Sub- Committee to report on satisfaction with adaptations completed. Additionally, quality control inspections will be carried out in each property where adaptations have been completed.
- 8.3 We will keep tenants informed during the disabled adaptation process. We will advise tenants of the contractor instructed to carry out the work, the installation date and expected duration of the works. We will offer tenants a choice of decorative wallboards, where practicable, when installing wet floor areas, level access and over bath showers.

9.0 MONITORING

- 9.1 Expenditure on disabled adaptations will be monitored against our annual budget to ensure effective budget control.
- 9.2 We will ensure our property database is regularly updated to reflect our adapted stock. This will provide improved information on housing stock and assist in future replacement programmes and bids for funding to Scottish Government.
- 9.3 We will maximise the use of adapted stock in our allocations process to enable tenants and housing applicants to be matched to adapted properties which meet their needs.

10.0 POLICY REVIEW

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis.
- 10.2 We will undertake a review of policy and/or operational procedures where adaptation assessment procedures are amended by the local authority. In addition, we will undertake a review of the policy in response to any change in the funding regime affecting the Association.

Lanarkshire Housing Association Limited



Disabled Adaptations Procedure

SEPTEMBER 2022

Lanarkshire Housing Association Limited - Housing Services Department

1.0 IDENTIFYING NEED

- 1.1 Housing and Property Staff will recognise when tenant's needs are not being met and can identify problems with mobility and use of standard facilities within the property.
- 1.2 Where a potential disabled adaptation need is identified, tenants will be encouraged to complete a self-assessment through the makinglifeeasier.org.uk portal.

2.0 APPLICATIONS & REFERRALS

- 2.1 Lanarkshire Housing Association tenants will complete a self-assessment through makinglifeeasier.org.uk.
- 2.2 Adaptations for tenants will be subject to assessment by NLC Social Work Department (occupational therapist) to assess the need for adaptations. Adaptations for sharing owners and owner occupiers will be subject to application to North Lanarkshire Council for Home Improvement Grant to assist with the cost of the required disabled adaptation.

3.0 ASSESSMENT OF NEED

- 3.1 Assessment of priority for disabled adaptations will be carried out in accordance with North Lanarkshire Council's disabled adaptations procedures. An occupational therapist will carry out the necessary assessment of the request and refer to LHA using a priority scoring system (Priority 1-4) identifying the degree of urgency for the adaptations as assessed by the Occupational Therapist.
- 3.2 On receipt of the recommendation for disabled adaptation from Social Work Department, this will be passed to the Housing Assistant to check priority score and information contained on the form. A record of the application will be input into the Disabled Adaptation Register.
- 3.3 General enquires on priority scoring assessment, should be directed to North Lanarkshire Council's Occupational Therapist Department.
- 3.4 Priority for processing disabled adaptations will be based on the priority score awarded.
- 3.5 In view of budget restraints, tenants with non-priority scores will be advised that the adaptation is unlikely to proceed in the current year unless there is an under spend in the budget, or a significant change in their priority score.

- 3.6 Applications for handrails may not be included in the Occupational Therapist's assessment unless it forms part of wider disabled adaptation requirements. Applications for handrails must still be made to North Lanarkshire Council through their makinglifeeasier.org.uk portal.

4.0 MAJOR ADAPTATIONS

- 4.1 The definition of major adaptations is where significant structural adaptations are required. This includes work that involves structural or other permanent changes to a house, but excluding work to extend a structure to create additional living accommodation
- 4.2 Major adaptations may incorporate Scottish Government Stage 1 or 2 adaptations criteria and are normally included within the design of a property. This type of adaptation would require close liaison with Property Services staff to co-ordinate work and seek approval of Scottish Government.
- 4.3 Major Adaptations for work up to £15,000 will be subject to full consultation on feasibility of the work proceeding, taking account of all other housing options available and assessment of priority score placing on disabled adaptation register and urgency of the required alterations.
- 4.4 Major adaptations over the value of £15,000 will be subject to full assessment of circumstances, detailed liaison with Social Work Department, Health and Social Care colleagues and Scottish Government on feasibility of approval of grant for the required major adaptations.

5.0 HOUSING ALLOCATION PROCEDURES

- 5.1 The ability to meet increased demand for disabled adaptations may be limited by grant resources. The Scottish Government annual resource allocation will have an impact on the number of adaptations processed annually – although there are often 'in-year' opportunities for additional funding if other providers do not use their full allotment of funding.
- 5.2 In assessing housing need, every attempt should be made to marry the housing needs of applicants to make best use of existing stock and utilise resources.
- 5.3 Housing Staff will assess any offer of general needs housing to someone with additional needs, through consultation with North Lanarkshire Council, Housing and Social Work Departments.
- 5.4 A database of properties with Disabled Adaptations will be maintained. This will be updated annually in order that the data register may assist in suitable allocation processes.

6.0 MANAGEMENT OF THE PROCESS

6.1 Housing Services will be responsible for managing the disabled adaptation process with responsibility as follows :-

- Housing Services
Have responsibility for identifying, processing and prioritising applications.
 - Property Services
Will be responsible for tendering procedures, costing and instructing work to contractors.
 - Housing and Property Services
Have responsibility for liaising and managing the budget process.
 - Housing Services
Will process Housing Association Grant claims to Scottish Government.
 - Property Services
Will undertake customer satisfaction survey of work instructed.
- Quality Control and reporting to committee on outcome.
- Housing and Property Services
Monitoring effectiveness of Policy and Procedures with recommendations input to the review process.

7.0 RESPONSIBILITY & INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

- 7.1 Housing Services will ensure efficient and fair processing of disabled adaptation applications.
- 7.2 Copy of Housing Association Grant applications will be submitted to Corporate Services for audit and reconciliation with Housing Association Grant received.
- 7.3 Communication with Property Services on feasibility of adaptation being carried out within the property based on technical information and budget will be undertaken on an individual case basis.
- 7.4 Housing Staff will ensure high standard of liaison and communication with Social Work Departments and tenants on application assessment and priority of work being processed.
- 7.5 Housing Staff will ensure streamlined processing of disabled adaptation applications and the flow of information between departments.

8.0 FUNDING

- 8.1 Housing Services will make a funding request on an annual basis to Scottish Government. The request is normally based on previous year's spend and applications outstanding from the previous year.
- 8.2 A submission will be made to Scottish Government on a Quarterly basis via HARP portal to reclaim Association spend and Administration fees.
- 8.3 Year-end statistics on spending will be Submitted to Scottish Government in March each year to consolidate and close funding budget.

9.0 COMMITTEE REPORTING

- 9.1 A quarterly report will be submitted to the Housing Services Sub Committee on grant processing and expenditure.
- 9.2 An annual report on customer satisfaction with disabled adaptation process will be undertaken and reported to Housing Services Sub Committee.

10. POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

A three yearly review of the Disabled Adaptation Policy will be undertaken, with ongoing monitoring of policy and procedural effectiveness.

11. CHARITABLE FUNDING

- 11.1 Charitable sources may be available to meet the cost of some minor adaptations. Service charities, occupational benevolent funds and local charitable bodies are all potential sources of funding. Care and Repair staff or the Disabled Persons Housing Service may provide guidance in accessing funding.

12. URGENT CASES

- 12.1 Identified urgent cases will, in exceptional circumstances, be considered as a special case by Housing Services Sub Committee. Recommendation to Committee for approval to bridge disabled adaptation finance over 2 financial years will be subject to consultation between Housing Services and Corporate Services and considered based on need and resources available.

13. VAT

- 13.1 Items for the benefit of disabled people are eligible for zero rated VAT.