



Cloch Housing Association

Adaptations Policy

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1.0 POLICY AIMS

1.1 The main aims of this policy are to: -

1. support the independence and dignity of tenants by undertaking adaptations to their existing homes to improve quality of life;
2. reduce extended stays in hospital;
3. benefit the ageing population;
4. reduce inappropriate housing conditions;
5. ensure that the Association makes best use of its housing stock and resources available by allocating vacant adapted houses to tenants with similar medical needs;
6. be a caring and responsive landlord;
7. provide housing that enables those with special needs to stay in the community;
8. develop robust management information systems for monitoring and reporting performance in the Annual Return on the Charter which can be independently verified.

2.0 STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

2.1 This policy sets out Cloch's (CHA) approach to aids and adaptations, to ensure that in this demand led service, the process is managed efficiently and in a cost effective manner to make the best use of housing stock and the limited funding made available by the Scottish Government.

2.2 CHA is committed to ensuring where reasonably practicable, tenants and their immediate households are able, to live comfortably within their homes with independence, privacy and dignity. We are committed to providing fair and equal treatment to all our tenants, and will not discriminate against any of them on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, language, religion, belief, age, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family circumstances, employment status, physical ability and mental health. We will positively endeavour to achieve fair outcomes for all.

3.0 Legislation and Regulation

3.1 This policy will comply with all relevant and updated legislative, good practice and regulatory standards including:

- Legislation concerning social landlords and tenants;

- Building and trade specific standards and regulations;
- Procurement Legislation

4.0 COMPLIANCE WITH THE SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER

4.1 This policy aims to comply with the following Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes: -

Outcome 1: Equalities – every tenant and other customer will have their individual needs recognised, be treated fairly and with respect and receive fair access to housing and housing services.

Outcome 2: Tenancy Sustainment – tenants will receive 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 CHA and by other organisations.

5.0 EQUALITIES

5.1 This policy aims to comply with all relevant equalities legislation. The main Act that regulates our equality policies and service delivery is the Equality Act 2010.

5.2 Equality and Disability legislation does not require Landlords to remove or alter any physical feature in a tenancy. However, in terms of the tenancy agreement, any request to adapt the property will be considered in terms of this policy and no such request will be refused unreasonably.

6.0 WHO QUALIFIES FOR AN ADAPTATION?

6.1 CHA will normally consider a request for an aid or adaptation made on behalf of a tenant or a member of the tenant's immediate family to whom we have given consent to reside in the property and who is permanently resident in the household. The tenant(s) must agree to the adaptation, following a consultation with the Occupational Therapist or competent medical practitioner.

6.2 Shared Ownership owners, Shared Equity owners and Owner-Occupiers are not eligible for adaptations work by CHA, however, CHA can refer enquiries onto the local Care & Repair service, Inverclyde Council Social Work department or Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership for further information.

6.3 Generally speaking, any request for an aid or adaptation must be supported by a medical assessment (CL1) that has been carried out by a qualified Occupational Therapist (OT), or competent medical practitioner.

6.4 There will be cases where it will not be appropriate to carry out or consent to an adaptation. It will not be appropriate to carry out an adaptation:

- where the location or design of the property renders work inappropriate or impracticable e.g. if the tenant is unlikely to find the flat suitable or accessible in the long-term;
- where the tenant's needs or the needs of the person requiring the adaptation are likely to change in the short-term;
- Where the tenant is actively seeking alternative accommodation;
- When making a decision on consenting to the adaptation we will consider the following: -
 - a. Is the location of the property contradictory to the adaptation request i.e. A wet floor or similar shower being installed in flat higher than the first floor of a tenement without considering the tenants needs to be rehoused
 - b. What the effect will be on the individual disabled person if we do not carry out the work;
 - c. The extent to which it is practicable to make the adaptation;
 - d. The financial costs of making the adaptation;
 - e. The extent of any disruption and the effect on other tenants which making the adaptation would cause;
 - f. The availability of financial or other assistance;
 - g. Whether the adaptation will have an effect on the size of the accommodation.
 - h. The length of time the tenant is likely to live at the property.
 - i. How much work is involved?
 - j. The safety of the occupiers of the house or of any other premises
 - k. whether the work will comply with planning permission and building standards
 - l. Whether it will be necessary or possible to put the property back to the way it was before the work was done.

6.5 Where the requested adaptation is considered unsuitable because of location or design; or where consent is refused on the basis that it is unreasonable to do so, CHA will discuss with the tenant the prospects of transferring to other

more suitable and accessible housing accommodation which better fits their specific requirements. If this accommodation doesn't exist, then a transfer to a property that can be more readily adapted may be considered. This may include the possibility of a transfer to another Registered Social Landlord. Notwithstanding the above, CHA would not be in a position to guarantee that the tenant would be successful in securing suitable alternative accommodation.

7.0 DEFINITIONS OF ADAPTATIONS

- 7.1** An adaptation is an alteration or addition which is made to a property to ensure that it meets the physical needs of an occupant in relation to their disability or illness. CHA splits Adaptations into three distinct categories. See Appendix 1.
- 7.2** Category 1 Adaptations will only be considered in tenement properties on ground floors and first floors (except where a lift is in place) and in all property types within our housing stock.
- 7.3** Category 2 Adaptations will be considered in all properties.
- 7.4** Category 3 Adaptations or (Major Adaptations) will only be considered if the necessary funding is made available through the Scottish Government grant funded basis. The life span of an adaptation of this nature must satisfy the requirements of the Scottish Government funding criteria i.e. the life span of the adaptation is expected to exceed 5 years. Tenants or the ICIL request must therefore be able to demonstrate the necessity for the adaptation in the long term. In addition, CHA would not consent to such an adaptation if the impact of the work was to cause difficulty regarding the future allocation of the property.

8.0 TIME LIMITS FOR RESPONSE TO APPLICANTS

- 8.1** Following CHA's receipt of a referral, CHA will acknowledge this to the client within 5 working days.
- 8.2** Following any necessary site surveys a decision letter will be sent to the applicant within 10 working days after the survey intimating whether the application has been granted or refused.
- 8.3** If the application is refused, the decision letter to the tenant will contain the reasons for the refusal.
- 8.4** If the application is granted, then it may be granted subject to conditions. Any such conditions will be detailed on the consent letter.

9.0 FINANCING THE WORKS

- 9.1** The Scottish Government makes provisions for Housing Associations to claim grant monies for requested adaptations. Where possible, it is CHA's intention to pursue this route of finance for all adaptations.

9.2 However, where any grant approved by the Scottish Government has been exhausted or the cost of a required adaptation will exceed the remaining budget, and the Scottish Government are unable to provide further funding then they may be held in abeyance until such time as new funds become available.

9.3 Where possible, CHA will look to maximise opportunity for adaptations when carrying out other programme commitments. For example, adaptation works might be facilitated through the Associations Planned Maintenance and Development programme.

9.4 Subject to available funding adaptations will be categorised in accordance with the Occupational Therapists recommendations and prioritised using the date of the CL1 received or unless otherwise advised by Occupational Therapists or competent medical practitioner.

10.0 DELIVERY OF ADAPTATIONS

10.1 CHA aims to deliver the prescribed installations or adaptations to our homes through instruction to a suitable competent contractor who is able to demonstrate competence is working in this specialist environment.

10.2 The award of these works will be through a recognised procurement route which will be in accordance with our Procurement Policy. The successful contractor will be awarded the works subject to conditions and duties as stipulated in the Reactive Repairs Policy.

10.3 The process involved from award of works to completion from CHA to the contractor will be stipulated within the tender and confirmed at the contract pre-start meeting.

11.0 SERVICE CHARGES POLICY

11.1 In some instances, adaptations might result in a service charge being levied against the property. Where this situation occurs, and prior to carrying out the works, CHA will seek written confirmation that the tenant will accept the additional charge. An adaptation will only be progressed on receipt of this written confirmation.

11.2 Properties that have been subject to major adaptations will have any new relevant Rent Setting Policy elements incorporated into the next cycle of Rent Review (usually annually).

12.0 REMOVAL OF ADAPTATIONS

12.1 Adaptations will only be removed from properties at the point where the property has become void and doesn't suit the needs of the new in-coming tenant. where the property is unable to be re-let to applicants requiring the adaptation.

13.0 MONITORING

- 13.1** CHA's Housing and Property Services subcommittee will receive Quarterly reports on adaptations activities, such as completions and expenditure against available budget
- 13.2** CHA will be able to demonstrate for any given decision how and why a decision was made. CHA will maintain an audit trail that details the entire process for every adaptation applied for.
- 13.3** CHA will also monitor tenant's levels of satisfaction regarding the adaptation process to measure how the adaptation actually met the tenant's requirements and expectations. Tenant(s) who have had a Category 1 & 2 adaptation carried out will be encouraged to complete a satisfaction questionnaire to obtain feedback on the whole adaptations process. CHA will post-inspect 100% of all stage 1 works, all wet floor and shower installations and 10% of all other completed Category 2 & 3 works.
- 13.4** CHA will keep a register of adapted properties; detailing the type of adaptation provided against each property and the cost of the adaptation on SDM.

14.0 DECISION MAKING AND APPEALS

- 14.1** The Head of Property Services ~~Manager~~ will oversee the adaptation process and ensure that policy guidelines are complied with. The Senior Property Services Officer will consider and investigate both the cost and technical feasibility of the adaptation work in accordance with the Scottish Government's funding requirements, CHA's Financial Regulations and available budget.
- 14.2** Category 1 & 2 Adaptations out-with policy guidelines will not be considered.
- 14.3** Any applicant who is dissatisfied with a decision can lodge a complaint in terms of the Association's complaints policy. If they are still not satisfied they can refer matters to the Public Services Ombudsman.

Category 1 Adaptations

- Wet Floor Shower Areas
- Level Access Showers
- Overbath Showers
- Kitchen Adaptations

Category 2 Adaptations

- Internal Alterations i.e. Door Frames
- Step Alterations
- Sliding Doors
- Handrails
- Grab Rails
- Lever Taps
- Additional Door Entry Handsets
- Additional Electric Sockets
- Flashing Beacons
- Non-slip or tactile surfaces
- Automatic Door Openers

Category 3 Adaptations (Major Adaptations or other adaptations not included in categories 1-2 or costing >£5,000)

These may include: -

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- Storage space for wheelchair
- Carport or covered access to property
- Stair Lifts
- Ramps
- Hoists
- Extensions or alterations to provide a suitable bedroom or bathroom.
- Vertical through floor lift
- Re-design of existing kitchen
- Creation of hard standings or other extensive alterations

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and other adaptations will be considered.