

## ADAPTATIONS POLICY

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## 1. Introduction

This policy sets out the key principles that will be used by Milnbank Housing Association (MHA) in relation to the management of Medical Adaptations.

It is MHA's policy to respond wherever possible to adaptation requests (via the Occupational Therapist assessment) for tenants or members of their family with a disability or a specific housing need. Any request will be considered in line with the availability of funding to carry out such work on an annual basis.

The Adaptations Policy has been set by the Management Committee of MHA and will be operated by relevant staff of MHA e.g., Asset Management, Community Engagement & Housing Services.

In relation to the Medical Adaptation process the Policy covers the following:

- Initial Referrals
- Referral Acceptance/Prioritisation/Refusal
- Re-allocation of Adapted Property
- Quality Control & Customer Satisfaction
- Maintenance/Replacement /Removal Adaptation
- Funding
- Monitoring & Review

## 2. General Aims & Objectives

The Adaptations Policy aims to ensure that the Association effectively administers referrals from Social Work Services Occupational Therapists for adaptations that will enable disabled tenants and tenants with specific housing needs to continue to live in their home. A list of adaptation works carried out by the Association is detailed in **Appendix 1** – this list is not exhaustive and other referrals may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The main objectives of this policy include:

- supporting the independence and dignity of tenants by undertaking adaptations to their existing properties to improve quality of life;
- acknowledging that in some instances construction type and financial constraints may prohibit the successful adaptation of a property;
- maximising grant funding available from the Scottish Government;
- ensuring that the Association carries out adaptations that are appropriate to the tenant's needs and therefore, utilised to their full potential;
- ensuring that the Association makes best use of its housing stock and resources available by allocating vacant adapted houses to tenants with similar medical needs;
- having systems and procedures in place, which ensure that the medical adaptations process is carried out efficiently, effectively, and economically for both Association and tenant;
- Reviewing policies, procedures, and systems regularly to ensure they are up to date and reflect current best practice guidance and legislation.
- Responding promptly to referrals for adaptations.
- fully comply with our legal obligations and Outcomes 1 and 11 as set out in The Scottish Social Housing Charter

- Develop robust management information systems for monitoring and reporting performance in the Annual Return on the Charter which can be independently verified.
- Provide an annual Adaptations Report to Committee, including all adaptations completed and funding received.

### **3. Legislation & Best Practice Guidance**

MHA will comply with all relevant performance standards, or any targets set down to deliver adaptations to the homes of disabled people to meet their needs and statutory entitlements.

MHA Adaptations Policy is consistent with our Tenancy Sustainment Policy and complies with MHA's Equality Policy to ensure equality of treatment for all tenants without discrimination or prejudice.

MHA recognises that confidentiality is important to tenants and will treat their tenancy information in the strictest confidence under the Data Protection Act 1998 and in line with MHA's Openness and Confidentiality Policy.

### **4. Adaptations**

#### **Referrals**

The Occupational Therapist (OT) Section of the Social Work Services has the responsibility for identifying and assessing the need for all adaptations works. The Association will help tenants to complete referral forms or provide details on the relevant persons to contact within the Social Work Services to arrange for an assessment to be carried out.

The existence of the self-assessment is noted where tenants can self-assess for internal and external handrails ONLY.

Each application is considered on a case-by-case basis by Asset Management, Community Engagement and Housing Services.

In the first instance the Asset Management Function will acknowledge receipt of any referrals for adaptations to the tenant in writing to give an indication of the timescale for the processing of any work. If at that stage, there is lack of funding to carry out the adaptation or the adaptation is not possible the tenant will be advised of this.

#### **Referral Acceptance/Prioritisation/Refusal**

The Association will maintain a list of applicants graded by priority based upon referrals from the OT. Due to funding, it may only be possible to progress referrals by priority e.g., Priority 1 (P1). Where referrals fall below this grade they will be retained on file and may only be funded if additional resources become available. However, should a tenant's condition change whilst on the waiting list, their points reviewed, and an updated referral supported by the OT.

The OT will complete the referral form which identifies the priority of the works and recommend the type of work required to meet the tenant's needs.

On receipt of the referral from the OT **Appendix 2** lays out the procedure carried out by the Association on processing the adaptation works from start to completion.

The Association will endeavour to carry out adaptation work which meets the long term needs of its residents; however, it also recognises that there may be situations where it is not appropriate to carry out some forms of adaptation work. For example:

- If the tenant is on the transfer list and other more suitable accommodation is available.
- If the tenant's needs are likely to change very soon and the proposed adaptations no longer meets the long-term requirements of the tenant.
- There should be sufficient resources available to fund the works.
- The proposed adaptation should not contravene statutory requirements such as planning.
- It is not technically possible to carry out the adaptation.

If the Association refuses to carry out an adaptation, consideration will be given to addressing the tenant's needs with the provision of alternative accommodation within the Association's existing stock. In such an instance the Association will consult with the tenant and the OT to consider alternative housing options. The Association acknowledges the positive impact that adaptation work can have on improving a tenant's quality of life and will seek to arrive at a compromise where possible. Each set of circumstances will be considered on its own merit.

### **Re-Allocation of Adapted Property**

Procedures for the re-allocation of adapted property will be set out in the Association's Allocation Policy.

The Association will endeavour to make best use of its adapted stock by allocating/matching incoming households with such properties who require relevant adaptations.

At the ending of a tenancy and at a pre letting stage, it is the duty of the Association to ensure that EquipU/Community Engagement is contacted to uplift any portable adaptive equipment which has been left in the house by an outgoing tenant.

### **Quality Control & Customer Satisfaction**

The Association's Asset Officer will carry out a post completion inspection of the works to ensure they have been carried out to a high standard and that the tenant is able to make full use of the adaptation.

The OT will be notified that works are complete to enable them to carry out a post inspection of the works to evaluate whether the adaptation has achieved its aim.

### **Maintenance, Replacement & Removal**

The Association will maintain the costs associated with adaptations from the Asset Management budget.

Where renewal/replacement of an adaptation is required, the Association will attempt to obtain a new recommendation from the OT and make new application for funds.

## **5. Funding**

The Association's funding is provided by DRS – Housing and Regeneration Services, through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP and Scheme of Assistance) to assist with the provision of adaptations to tenants who have been identified as requiring assistance in the form of permanent medical adaptations to allow them to remain in their own home. The amount of funding provided is based on the Association's requirements for the year ahead.

Expenditure on adaptations varies from year to year based upon the needs of individual tenants and the availability of funding. It is envisaged that MHA could potentially spend significant sums on adaptations given the ageing population and other community care needs.

Adaptations will only go ahead where there is clear confirmation of funding availability. The Association initially fund the adaptation and the grant is claimed retrospectively.

The Asset Manager/Assistant will monitor the demand and expenditure on adaptations throughout the year. Should additional funding become available the Asset Manager/Assistant will make an application as soon as possible.

## **6. Monitoring & Review**

1. The Asset Manager will be responsible for managing and monitoring the adaptations service.
2. MHA will meet the reporting requirements by quarterly reporting to Committee on ARC performance targets.
3. Committee will be advised on an annual basis of the nature and cost of adaptations undertaken during the year.
4. All adaptations will be recorded on the computerised housing/maintenance system. A separate register will also be maintained which identifies all adaptations carried out by the Association.
5. The Association will publicise its Adaptations Policy through our website and through the tenant's newsletter.
6. The Adaptations Policy will be subject to review every 3 years or sooner if required by statutory, regulatory, or best practice requirements.

**Eligible Adaptations (List not exhaustive)**

**External Adaptations**

- Handrail at front or rear of dwelling
- Widening paths around property
- Modification or widening of steps
- Defining steps for people with visual impairment
- Outdoor lighting
- Paved areas for wheelchairs
- Carport or covered access to property
- Installation of ramp to front / rear access

**Internal Adaptations**

- Widening or re-hanging of doors
- Re-positioning of door locks
- Replacing doorknobs etc
- Installation of door call, entry phone and door unlock systems
- Additional stair rail
- Alterations to windows
- Installation of stair lift
- Vertical hoist including reinforcing ceilings and provision of hoist track
- Provision of level access shower, adapted bath etc
- Alteration or relocation of taps, power supplies, lights, sockets and heating appliances
- Storage space for wheelchair
- Acoustic insulation
- Warning or alarm systems
- Non-slip or tactile surfaces
- Letter cages or delivery shelf
- Alterations to kitchen storage or equipment (excluding full re-design)

**Major Works**

- Extensions or alterations to provide suitable bedroom or bathroom for a disabled person
- Vertical through floor lift
- Re-design of existing kitchen
- Creation of hard standings or other extensive external alterations

### **Adaptations Procedure**

- Tenant makes enquiry to MHA about an Adaptation
- Tenant is advised by MHA to contact Social Work Occupational Therapy Section who will assess the tenants need for the Adaptation
- MHA receives the completed Referral Form from Occupational Therapist.
- MHA will decide if the Adaptation works are appropriate
- MHA will check and advise if the funding is available for carrying out the work
- Once the funding and need for Adaptation has been approved, Occupational Therapist and tenant are notified that the works are going ahead
- Member of the Asset Team arrange a date and time with the tenant to quote for the works
- MHA receive in quote from contractor
- Member of Asset Team instructs the works and arranges a pre-start meeting with the contractor to review Health and Safety procedures.
- Upon completion of Adaptation works, Occupational Therapist is notified who will, if required, visit the tenant to assess for any additional equipment e.g., shower chairs – this is not provided by MHA but by the Social Work Department
- Await Contractors Invoice.
- Collate all contractor invoices and submit Claim to Glasgow City Council (GCC) to re-coup monies spent on Adaptations on a monthly basis.
- Claims are submitted to GCC through the HARP (Housing and Regeneration Programmes) scheme. Asset staff populate the template spreadsheet provided by GCC detailing the works carried out and at what addresses along with all costs.
- This completed spreadsheet is sent to MHA Finance Officer who uploads it onto the GCC's HARP System, and the money is reimbursed to MHA.
- Update MHA Adaptations register to show new adaptation works carried out
- Going forward, the Associations Adaptation Register will be incorporated on our Homemaster software system.