

TO:	Management Committee
PREPARED BY:	Mark Smith (Director of Asset Management)
SUBJECT:	ADAPTATIONS POLICY
DATE OF MEETING:	10 June 2025
APPROVED BY:	Paul Martin (CEO)

# **ADAPTATIONS POLICY**

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## **ADAPTATIONS POLICY**

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## **1. MILNBANK HOUSING ASSOCIATION (MHA) STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

MHA's mission is to provide excellent homes and services in a thriving community. We believe that people living in the MHA community should:

- Have warm, safe, and affordable homes, and receive excellent services from MHA.
- Live in neighbourhoods that are clean and well cared for, with real community pride.
- Have access to opportunities and services that promote a good quality of life.

## **2. MHA's VALUES**

Working as 'One Milnbank' so that we offer the same quality of services, support and housing to all tenants and residents.

## **3. LEGAL & REGULATORY COMPLIANCE**

The Management Committee leads and directs MHA to ensure good outcomes for its tenants and other service users. The Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcome 1: Equalities states that social landlords must ensure *'every tenant and other customer has their individual needs and rights recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services'*.

MHA will comply with all relevant performance standards, or any targets set down to deliver adaptations to the homes of tenants with particular medical requirements 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.

Moreover, the Association strives to meet all our duties and obligations in accordance with relevant statutory obligations. Legislation relevant to this policy includes:

- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Building Standards (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2001
- Equality Act 2010
- The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968
- Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons (Scotland) Act 1972
- Human Rights Act 1998

MHA recognises that confidentiality is important to tenants and will treat their tenancy information in the strictest confidence under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR and in line with MHA's Openness and Confidentiality Policy.

#### **4. POLICY 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 particular medical condition that requires 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
- Reversal of medical adaptations
- Funding
- Monitoring & Review

The Scottish Government classifies Adaptations into three groups:

**Stage 1** – Design features which are not specific to a condition or an individual and which are incorporated into the initial specification prior to construction or improvement.

**Stage 2** – Adaptations to a house to meet the particular needs of a tenant to whom the property has been allocated before, or close to, practical completion. These adaptations may be completed by the original contractor.

**Stage 3** – An adaptation 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 house was originally provided.

All categories of adaptations can have many benefits, including allowing tenants to live independently and safely in their homes. This can have a positive effect on quality of life, mental health and ensures that tenants can remain in their home for as long as possible.

## **5. PRINCIPLES OF THE ADAPTATIONS POLICY**

The Adaptations Policy aims to ensure that the Association effectively administers referrals from Social Work Services Occupational Therapists for adaptations that will enable 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, processed through Glasgow City Council.
- Ensuring that the Association carries out adaptations that are appropriate to the tenant's needs.
- 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.

## **6. ADAPTATIONS PROCESS**

### **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 provide details on the relevant persons to contact within the Social Work Services to arrange for an assessment to be carried out.

Each application is considered on a case-by-case basis by the Asset and Maintenance Team and Housing Services.

In the first instance the Maintenance team 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 accordingly.

### **Referral Acceptance/Prioritisation**

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, and this is supported by an updated OT referral, then their priority status will be amended accordingly.

The OT is responsible for completing the relevant referral form which identifies the priority of the works and specifies the adaptation(s) required to meet the tenant's needs.

On receipt of the referral from the OT, **Appendix 2** lays out the procedures 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 insufficient 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.
- The requested adaptation is deemed likely to cause long term maintenance issues or is not appropriate for the construction of the dwelling.

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. Where appropriate, 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 are 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 Maintenance team will carry out a post completion inspection of any adaptation 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 and Replacement**

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

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

## **Reversal of Adaptations**

Given the expenditure associated with medical adaptations any reversal must be approved by the Association. There are two scenarios deemed feasible for a removal / reversal of an adaptation and the criteria for approval are set out below:

<b>Scenario 1</b>	Tenant no longer has a need for previously requested adaption that has been completed
<b>Criteria for reversal/removal</b>	<p>An updated OT report must be submitted to the Maintenance Team confirming that the previous adaptation is now redundant and no longer required</p> <p>Adaptation must be beyond 70% of its expected life cycle and costs will be reviewed before any decision is made regarding removal.</p>
<b>Scenario 2</b>	Adapted dwelling has not been able to be re-allocated to a tenant in need of measure fitted
<b>Criteria for reversal/removal</b>	<p>Asset and Maintenance team to assess and only remove adaptation if it is causing particular distress or discomfort to tenants daily life.</p> <p>Moreover, costs will be reviewed before any decision is made regarding removal.</p>



### **Medical Adaptations through New Build Property**

An adaptation to a property under construction where a tenant has been pre-allocated this property, would be classified as a stage 2 adaptation. This would be arranged by the Asset team, in close collaboration with the Associations Development Consultant, through the normal Occupational Therapist referral process.

## **7. FUNDING**

Medical Adaptations are paid for by the Association with funding claimed from Glasgow City Council and Scottish Government via Housing Association and Regeneration Programme (HARP Funding). The Association will normally only carry out works that are covered by funding and meet the qualifying works set out by funding criteria.

Expenditure on adaptations varies from year to year based upon the needs of individual tenants and funding allocation. The Asset team will submit an application at the start of every financial year to request funding to meet the current waiting list for adaptations. The true value of funding allocated is determined by NRS and therefore it cannot be guaranteed that all requested adaptations are completed.

It is envisaged that MHA could potentially spend significant sums on adaptations given the ageing population and other community care needs. However, adaptations will only go ahead where there is clear confirmation of funding availability.

The Asset Co-Ordinator will monitor the demand and expenditure on adaptations throughout the year. Should additional funding become available the Asset Co-Ordinator will make an application as promptly as possible.

## **8. EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS**

MHA's is committed to equal opportunities, and we will respond to the different needs and service requirements of individuals, and we will not discriminate against any individual for any reason outlined in Equality & Human Rights Legislation.

## **9. DATA COLLECTION**

MHA will manage all personal data in accordance with our obligations under the GDPR regulations and the Association's Policy.

## **10. POLICY MONITORING & REVIEW**

The Adaptations Policy will be reviewed by the Management Committee on a three-year basis, or as otherwise deemed necessary.

1. The Asset Co-Ordinator will be responsible for managing and monitoring the adaptations service.
2. The Asset and Maintenance Director will provide bi-annual reporting to Committee on Adaptations programme at the Maintenance and Development Sub Committee Meetings.
3. The Management Committee will be advised on an annual basis of the status and cost of adaptations undertaken during the year.
4. All adaptations will be recorded on the HomeMaster system which allows necessary reports for Arc return to be generated.
5. The Association will publicise its Adaptations Policy through our website and through the tenant's newsletter.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **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

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **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 Maintenance Team will arrange a date and time with the tenant to quote for the works
- MHA receive 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 HomeMaster system to record new adaptation works carried out