

ADAPTATIONS POLICY

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# INTRODUCTION

# 1.1 Ruchazie Housing Association (RHA) recognises that the physical needs of tenants and other household members can change during their tenancy. Many people with physical or sensory impairments would prefer to remain in their own homes. Often, the use of aids or adaptations is the most effective way of realising this preference.

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# 1.2 It is a fundamental objective of the policy that we will assist people to remain in their present home for as long as possible. RHA will consider carrying out repairs, improvements or adaptations to enable people to live in comfort and safety in the community. This will be done with the recognition that a person’s independence, confidence and dignity can be maintained.

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# In addressing the demand for aids and adaptations, RHA will work on a partnership basis with other agencies and organisations. Key partners in this will be the local authorities, mainly through social care and occupational therapy staff.

1. **AIMS**

2.1 The main aims of this policy are to: -

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1. support the independence and dignity of tenants by undertaking adaptations to their existing homes to improve quality of life;

1. reduce extended stays in hospital;

1. benefit the ageing population;

1. reduce inappropriate housing conditions;

1. 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;

1. be a caring and responsive landlord;

1. provide housing that enables those with special needs to stay in the community;

1. 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 RHA’s 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 local authority from the Scottish Government.

2.2 RHA 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.

# LEGISLATIVE AND REGUALTORY REQUIREMENTS

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. COMPLIANCE WITH THE SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER

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 RHA and by other organisations.*

# 5. EQUALITIES

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.

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. WHO QUALIFIES FOR AN ADAPTATION?**

6.1RHA will normally support and assist the carrying out of works which will enable independent living and enhance the quality of life of tenants with particular mobility or other impairments. In doing so it shall follow best practice and regulatory guidance in relation to procurement of works; and aim to ensure such adaptations are carried out quickly and competently. Detailed and accurate records about adapted properties shall be maintained to enable implementation of appropriate maintenance regimes; and to enable informed decisions to be made about their future allocation to other tenants.

6.2 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, RHA 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 we may consider 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, RHA would not be in a position to guarantee that the tenant would be successful in securing suitable alternative accommodation.

6.2 The Association will only refuse to carry out adaptive work in exceptional circumstances. This will include when:

* The location of the property or property layout and type makes it unsuitable for the long-term use of the tenant requesting the adaptation.
* Suitable alternative accommodation can be made available.
* The adaptation is technically difficult to achieve without detriment to the property and other tenants.
* Funding is not available.
* The specific advice from relevant agencies is that the proposed adaptation would not be appropriate.

# 7. 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. RHA splits Adaptations into three distinct categories. See Appendix 1.

7.2 Category 1 Adaptations will only be considered in properties on ground floors and first floors where a lift is in place.

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 local authority grant funded basis. The life span of an adaptation of this nature must satisfy the requirements of the funding criteria i.e. the life span of the adaptation is expected to exceed 5 years. Tenants request must therefore be able to demonstrate the necessity for the adaptation in the long term. In addition, RHA 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. TIME LIMITS FOR RESPONSE TO APPLICANTS

8.1 Following RHA’s receipt of a referral from the occupational therapist, RHA 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. FINANCING THE WORKS

9.1 The Scottish Government makes provisions for Housing Associations to claim grant monies for requested adaptations, delegated to Glasgow City Council. Where possible, it is RHA’s intention to pursue this route of finance for all adaptations.

9.2 However, where any grant approved by the local authority has been exhausted or the cost of a required adaptation will exceed the remaining budget, and the local authority 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, RHA 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 by urgency.

# SERVICE CHARGES POLICY

10.1 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, RHA will seek written confirmation that the tenant will accept the additional charge. An adaptation will only be progressed on receipt of this written confirmation.

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).

# REMOVAL OF ADAPTATIONS

11.1 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 OR where the property is unable to be re-let to applicants requiring the adaptation.

# MONITORING

12.1RHA’s Management Committee will receive Quarterly reports on adaptations activities, such as completions and expenditure against available budget

12.2 RHA will be able to demonstrate for any given decision how and why a decision was made. RHA will maintain an audit trail that details the entire process for every adaptation applied for.

12.3 RHA 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. RHA 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.

12.4 RHA will keep a register of adapted properties; detailing the type of adaptation provided against each property and the cost of the adaptation on SDM.

# DECISION MAKING AND APPEALS

13.1 The Property Services Officer will oversee the adaptation process and ensure that policy guidelines are complied with. The Director will consider and investigate both the cost and technical feasibility of the adaptation work in accordance with the Scottish Government’s funding requirements, RHA’s Financial Regulations and available budget.

13.2 Category 1 & 2 Adaptations out-with policy guidelines will not be considered.

13.3 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.

**14. REVIEW**

14.1 This policy will be reviewed by January 2023, or sooner if circumstances should require it.

**APPENDIX 1**

**Category 1 Adaptations**

* Wet Floor Shower Areas (ground floor bathrooms only or where a lift is in place)
* 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