

# DISABLED ADAPTATIONS POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2019



LANARKSHIRE  
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD



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## **Lanarkshire Housing Association Limited**

### **Disabled Adaptation Policy – September 2019**

(\*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.

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

- 2.1 The Charter was introduced in April 2012 and sets outcomes and standards for social landlords to achieve. The purpose of the Charter is to improve the quality and value of services social landlords provide and also supports Scottish Governments' objective of creating a 'Safer and Stronger' Scotland.
- 2.2 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 and assistance 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.

### **4.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

- 4.1 Our Equality and Diversity Policy positively promotes equal opportunities for all our customers and ensure equality of opportunity underpins all our policies, procedures and processes.
- 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.

### **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 adaptation.

- 5.3 A register of all referrals is maintained both for monitoring of expenditure against budget and for end of year reporting (Indicators 22 & 23 of the Annual Return on the Charter).
- 5.4 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 ADAPTATION STAGES FOR FUNDING POLICY AIMS**

- 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 ADAPPTIONS**

- 7.1 L.H.A. will ensure probity, quality and value for money in respect of procurement of disabled adaptations work, in compliance with our Maintenance Policy.
- 7.2 Selection of contractor(s) for disabled adaptations work will be based on our contractor selection and procurement criteria, detailed within the Maintenance 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 maximize 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.