

Equipment and Adaptations

Overall Statement

The aim of Aberdeenshire Council's Equipment and Adaptations Policy is to enable Tenants and their families to continue to live in their own homes safely and to maximise independence where the Council is unable to assist in the provision of suitable alternative accommodation to meet individual needs.

We aim to promote the service to Tenants, ensuring that needs are addressed and seek to work in partnership with Service Users to develop an environment of continuous improvement and good practice for the approval, installation, funding, management and maintenance of adaptations. For the purposes of this Policy Statement, an 'Adapted Home' is one where items have been specially fitted to assist with the individual needs of Tenants and their families.

We are committed to enabling older and disabled people to maintain their independence and to facilitate the discharge of tenants or their families from hospital. It is recognised that a significant proportion of requests for housing adaptations involve relatively minor works such as the provision of stair rails, grab rails, the repositioning of socket outlets or the removal of door thresholds. Where adaptations are deemed to be minor works, the Housing Service will aim to install without formal assessment in order that works can be completed as soon as practicable.

Where works such as the installation of ramps or shower trays are required it will be necessary for an assessment to be carried out by Housing staff. Sufficient levels of training and guidance will be provided to staff in order that appropriate assistance and advice can be offered to Tenants or their families.

Where adaptations are deemed to be more complex in nature, typically involving the structural alteration to a home, the Housing Service will work in conjunction with the Council's Occupational Therapists who will provide recommendations for work to be undertaken.

The Council will implement detailed procedures and agreed practices uniformly across the service. Employees will be trained and supported to ensure that they are equipped to carry out the roles expected of them.

Policy Aims

1 Suitability

- 1.1 We will normally adapt a property unless; the tenant's home is unsuitable for the adaptation required, there is more suitable housing available or the alteration required is not a fixture to the property.
- 1.2 Adaptations can be classed as either Minor or Major, in accordance with Aberdeenshire Council's Equipment and Adaptations Procedure.

- 1.3 We will carry out an assessment of suitability in respect of each case, with the aim of ensuring that the needs of the tenant are met and that an appropriate use of resources can be demonstrated. The assessment will ascertain:
- If the adaptation works are appropriate
 - Whether the property is suitable for adaptations
 - How easily the property could be let if the tenant no longer lived there
- 1.4 We will aim to ensure that residents can remain within their communities, when assessing suitability of the existing home for adaptations work, however, the Council will identify whether the needs of the Tenant can best be met through a transfer to a property, which is already adapted or is suitable for adaptation.
- 1.5 Where Major Works are proposed, we will consult with Occupational Therapists or other suitably qualified health care practitioners to provide appropriate solutions to meet residents' needs.

2 Delivery

- 2.1 We will allocate a budget each year to meet the anticipated demand for equipment and adaptations within Tenants' homes and communal areas. The level of anticipated demand will be assessed through regular consultation with Tenants, Occupational Therapists and Health Care practitioners. If the actual expenditure exceeds allocated budget prioritisation of works required may occur.
- 2.2 We aim to achieve a high level of satisfaction in relation to Adaptation work undertaken. A questionnaire will be provided in connection with all works undertaken with findings reported to Tenant and Management Groups with the aim of achieving continuous service improvement.
- 2.3 A Code of Conduct will be provided to Contractors, outlining the standards expected within a Tenant's home. Tenants will be informed of the contents of the Code on a regular basis and feedback monitored in respect of the Tenant Satisfaction Questionnaire.
- 2.4 Works will be managed effectively, ensuring that Contractors adhere to conditions and the Code of Conduct. Performance will be monitored to ensure that works are undertaken to a sufficient level of quality.
- 2.5 Where a tenancy ends in a property where equipment and adaptations (other than minor) have been installed, priority will be given to housing applicants who will benefit from the installation.
- 2.6 If there are no applicants who would benefit from the adaptation components, the installation may be removed.

- 2.7 We will aim to deal fairly and effectively with anyone making an appeal against or complaint about any activities or decisions relating to adaptation work to properties through the Council's standard procedure. We will also make it clear that any further complaint can be referred to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

3 Monitoring and Review

- 3.1 All major adaptation works to properties, together with any removal, will be recorded within the Council's Stock Condition Database ensuring a comprehensive and up to date record.
- 3.2 Tenant feedback is considered central to the monitoring and review process. A satisfaction questionnaire will be issued in respect of all works undertaken, with reports issued to Tenant and Management Groups on a regular basis.
- 3.3 The Council will set performance standards in relation to the Equipment and Adaptations Policy and will monitor and report on these on a regular basis, with the aim of promoting continuous service improvement.

4 Equality and diversity

In all aspects of the provision of an Adaptations service, we will:

- 4.1 Seek to combat discrimination and promote equal opportunities for tenants in all aspects of policy and procedures. This means the prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on grounds age, sex, race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.
- 4.2 Comply with the European Convention on Human Rights at all stages of the Adaptations process.