



Scheme of Assistance for Private Homeowners and Tenants of Private Landlords

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Part 1: Context

1.1 Introduction

Aberdeenshire Council are committed to improving the quality of housing in the private sector. By engaging and supporting homeowners with a varied range of advice, information, practical assistance and in some instances financial support we aim to enable people to take greater responsibility for the repair and maintenance of their home.

The following statement sets out Aberdeenshire Council's Scheme of Assistance and summarises the circumstances in which Aberdeenshire Council will provide help and support to homeowners to maintain their home and improve private sector housing stock and it sets out how we can assist with enabling people to stay in their own homes and live independently for as long as possible.

1.2 Background

Although homeowners are primarily responsible for maintaining and repairing their own homes, the [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2006](#) gives local authorities powers to provide a wide range of services to homeowners. [Section 72](#) of the Act requires all local authorities to produce a statement of assistance (Scheme of Assistance) for private homeowners and tenants setting out the circumstances in which it will provide information and advice; practical support; financial assistance to homeowners and private sector tenants to help them repair, maintain, improve or adapt their homes.

Approximately 80% of the houses in Aberdeenshire are privately owned. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 changed what was seen as a reliance by homeowners on Local Authorities providing grants supporting the upkeep of their homes with a move away from provision of financial assistance to providing information and advice services.

The [Scottish Government's Housing to 2040 route map](#), published in 2021 supports the importance of providing good, safe, secure and warm homes as a part of supporting peoples health and wellbeing. As part of this the Scottish Government is focussing on making better use of the homes we have and supporting owners and landlords to improve their properties and improve the overall quality of Scotland's Housing stock.

Part 4 of the Housing to 2040 route map focuses on improving the quality of all homes with the aim that everyone should be able to expect the same high standards no matter which tenure they live in. This includes creating homes that are easy to adapt and have plenty of space to support people's health and wellbeing.

Aberdeenshire Council's Scheme of Assistance sets out how it will meet its statutory duty to assist homeowners and private tenants to maintain their homes in the form

of information, advice and practical assistance and in certain circumstances, financial assistance.

1.3 Strategic Aims

The Scheme of Assistance reflects local and national priorities and supports the Council's [Local Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029](#) priorities:

- Priority 4 – Increase the supply of appropriate housing and support to ensure health and wellbeing across all of Aberdeenshire's Communities.
- Priority 5 – "Work towards Net Zero and a reduction in fuel poverty in Aberdeenshire"

The Scheme of Assistance aims to promote the primary responsibility of homeowners for the repairs and maintenance to their homes and sets out the types of assistance we will provide to help homeowners fulfil this responsibility. The aims of the Scheme of Assistance are to:

- Improve the quality and suitability of private sector housing
- Reduce the number of houses that are Below the Tolerable Standard (BTS)
- Adapt houses to make them suitable to meet the needs of a disabled person
- Encourage homeowners to repair, maintain and improve their homes
- Improve the energy efficiency of houses
- Give homeowners the information and support required to help them take ownership of repairing and maintaining their property

There are three elements to our Scheme of Assistance which will allow us to achieve these aims:

- **Information & Advice** – information & advice is available to help all homeowners carry out repairs, maintenance, improvements or adaptations to their homes
- **Practical Assistance** – practical help is available to assist homeowners to carry out repairs, maintenance, improvements or adaptations
- **Financial Assistance** – grants are available for eligible adaptations, small repair grants and private water supplies subject to available funding.

Part 2: House Condition Works

2.1 Types of assistance

The following types of assistance will be provided:

2.1.1 Information & Advice

Information and advice is available to **all** homeowners and private tenants across Aberdeenshire in relation to repairs, maintenance and energy efficiency to their homes. Information and advice is provided in the following ways:

- Telephone

- Aberdeenshire Council web page
- SCARF web page
- E-mail
- Written correspondence
- Sign posting to other agencies
- Provision of leaflets
- Events & Seminars

Information & advice regarding repairs and maintenance is provided by Aberdeenshire Council's [Private Sector Housing Team](#)

Information and advice regarding energy efficiency is available to all residents of Aberdeenshire from [SCARF](#). SCARF provides households with independent, free and impartial advice on energy efficiency.

2.1.2 Practical Assistance

Practical assistance is offered to **all** homeowners and private tenants across Aberdeenshire in relation to repairs, maintenance and improvement to their homes. Practical assistance is provided in the following ways:

- Home visits where necessary and appropriate to assist owners to identify what work is required and assist in prioritising works if necessary
- General advice on quotations, estimates and suitable contractors where appropriate

2.1.3 Small Repairs Service

In certain circumstances, and subject to budget provision, further practical assistance may be available to those who qualify for Aberdeenshire Councils Care and Repair Service through the provision of [Small Repair Grants](#). To qualify, people need to be over 65 and/or disabled.

The Small Repair Grant covers small internal and external repairs. The repairs are to ensure safety around the home, prevent the long term deterioration of a property and to make a property more energy efficient. Small jobs that are essential to maintain a person's health and wellbeing will also be considered.

There are restrictions to this service. You must be in receipt one of these qualifying benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- the guarantee credit part of Pension Credit
- Employment and Support Allowance (in the support group)
- Universal Credit Limited Capability for Work and Work Related Activity grant

In addition, the homeowner must stay in the property and the property must be in council tax band A-D. Funding will be provided for jobs estimated at around £250 and does not include repairs to outbuilding such as garages and conservatories.

2.1.4 Private Water Supply Grants

Financial assistance will be provided to **all** homeowners and private tenants to address the adequacy and wholesomeness of private water supplies in the form of [Private water supply grants](#). Grants are available to improve private water supplies, including the replacement of lead piping.

The grants are administered by Aberdeenshire Council's [Environmental Health Service](#) contact details can be found in **Appendix 1**. A grant of up to £800 can be awarded for improvements or formation of a new supply. Additional grant can be awarded depending upon costs and the applicant's financial circumstances.

2.2 When enforcement powers will be used

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 gives local authorities enforcement powers. A local authority can serve a Works Notice or Maintenance Order on the owner of a house to insist that the owner carries out repairs or maintenance to their property.

2.2.1 Work Notices

Work Notices can be served on the owner of a property to require them to carry out work to deal with sub-standard housing. A house is sub-standard if it is:

- [Below Tolerable Standard Policy](#)
- In a state of serious disrepair; or
- In need of repair and is likely to deteriorate rapidly or damage other premises if nothing is done to repair it.

On receipt of a complaint or information that a house may be substandard the Council will make a decision regarding the use or the potential use of these powers.

These powers are most likely to be used where communal repairs are required, including roofing repairs to blocks of flats, or where the condition of a house is likely to affect an adjacent house. Where appropriate, the Council will carry out an inspection of the property to identify repairs/improvements and advise the owner of works required. The Council will determine if the matter can be resolved voluntarily within an acceptable timescale or whether a Work Notice should be served. The lack of Council resources may prohibit the service of a Work Notice.

2.2.2 Maintenance Orders

A Maintenance Order requires the owner to develop a maintenance plan for the property, for a period of up to five-years, The local authority is able to step in to enforce the plan, if the owner fails to carry out the maintenance that the plan sets out. It is also able to recover the costs from the owner. The council will use these powers if permission is granted from the relevant Committee.

2.2.3 Mixed Tenure Areas

Owners in communal blocks where the Council still own flats will be provided information & advice on the [Tenements \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#) . The Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004 aims to ensure that communal parts of the building are kept in good repair.

The Council engage with owners in communal blocks where the council still owns flats and assist homeowners to use the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004 to help them carry out repairs and maintenance. Owners in blocks where the Council still own flats should contact the Housing Service if they believe they need common repairs carried out. See **Appendix 4** for contact details. The Glossary at **Appendix 3** gives more information on the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004.

2.2.4 Below Tolerable Standard Housing

Section 10 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 requires that all local authorities produce a policy on how to deal with housing that is below the Tolerable Standard. The Below Tolerable Standard policy aims to:

- Reduce the number of houses that are below the Tolerable Standard; **and**
- Prevent more houses from falling below the Tolerable Standard by encouraging homeowners to repair, maintain and improve their homes through the Council's Scheme of Assistance.

Please see the full [Below Tolerable Standard Policy](#) for further information:

2.2.5 Housing Renewal Areas

Section 10 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 also requires that all local authorities produce a policy on how it intends to deal with housing renewal areas. The Housing Renewal Area policy aims to:

- Reduce the number of individual houses that are sub-standard by encouraging homeowners to repair, maintain and improve their homes through the Scheme of Assistance, thereby negating the need to designate a Housing Renewal Area; **and**
- Prevent more houses from becoming sub-standard by encouraging homeowners to repair, maintain and improve their homes through the Scheme of Assistance.

Please see the [Housing Renewal Area](#) Housing Renewal Area Policy for more information:

Part 3: Adaptations and Standard Amenities for Disabled People

3.1 Types of assistance

The following types of assistance are provided.

3.1.1 Information & Advice

Our Occupational Therapy Service helps people of all ages with a range of services aimed at improving quality of life and helping people to remain as independent as possible in their own home. If you are having trouble with day-to-day living contact our [Occupational Therapy Service](#). The service will consider all your needs and work with you to help find ways to manage the daily tasks and activities that you need and want to do. There are many different options available to help with daily living and these include, using different techniques, providing equipment to keep you safe and independent, the provision of minor or major adaptations and, advice on alternative housing options within the private or public sector. [Self-help guides](#) have been created to support people to arrange their own adaptations.

3.1.2 Practical Assistance

Aberdeenshire Council [Care & Repair Service](#) provide a free information and advice service for any homeowner or private tenant. In addition, practical assistance is available to homeowners and private tenants aged 65 or over and people with disabilities in the form of:

- Advice and Information on practical ways to repair, maintain or improve your home
- Assisting with disabled adaptations
- Providing technical advice
- Arranging contractors and quotes for works identified
- Ensuring works are completed to the agreed specification
- Arranging professional assistance from specialists, consultants, or architects
- Referrals and signposting to other agencies who can assist with financial health checks

3.1.3 Financial Assistance

The aim of financial assistance is to support homeowners or private tenants to remain within their own home and support independent living and help with paying for minor and major adaptations.

3.1.4 Minor Adaptations

These require minimal disruption to your home and are often readily available, off the shelf solutions such as:

- Grab rails beside the toilet, bath or shower.
- Additional banister rails.
- Rails at the steps to your front door.

[Minor Adaptations](#) may be funded by the Council and can be requested through the [Occupational Therapist](#). You can make a request for some minor adaptations without an occupational therapy assessment if you are having difficulty because of a long-term illness or disability. You must also be a permanent Aberdeenshire resident living in your own home or rented accommodation and must have permission from the property owner.

3.1.5 Major Adaptations – Disabled Adaptations Grant

The Housing Scotland Act 2006 places a mandatory duty on local authorities to provide a minimum 80% grant funding for adaptations that provide disabled occupants with access to standard amenities suitable for purpose that are deemed essential to meet their needs. Standard Amenities are:

- An accessible shower and wash hand basin provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water
- A suitably located accessible toilet available for the exclusive use of the occupants of the house
- An accessible kitchen sink with a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water

Mandatory disabled adaptation grant may be available for amenities such as level access showers, graded paths, widening of doors for internal/external access and the lowering of kitchen units to allow wheelchair access. Assessments and recommendations are required from the Occupational therapy Service.

Requests for Occupational Therapy equipment that can be recycled such as modular ramps, through floor lifts, internal step lifts, curved stairlifts and kitchen rise and fall units will not be considered for funding through disabled adaptation grant.

The Housing (Scotland) Act provides that the Council offer a mandatory grant of 80% irrespective of your income, towards the approved cost of the work. If you are in receipt of any income related benefits (examples listed below), then you will receive 100% for the approved costs.

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Pension Credit (guaranteed element)
- Income Related employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit

Grant funding will only be available to cover the work that is essential to meet your needs and make facilities usable for you and only the approved element of the works will be funded. If you want to do additional improvement works while the adaptation is being completed, such as wet walling the entire room or the provision of extra living accommodation, then you will be required to meet these additional costs in full privately.

This means grant funding will not include work to extend any structure of a house to create additional space or any work to create living space in a separate building from the current living accommodation with the exception of standard amenities.

If you qualify for the mandatory 80% disabled adaptation grant you will still have a 20% private contribution to pay directly to your contractor towards the works. If you find that you are struggling with this cost then we can refer/signpost to charities and organisations who may be able to assist with income maximisation and charitable fund raising.

3.1.6 Critical and Substantial Risk

Disabled adaptation grants will only be considered after an [assessment of needs](#) has been carried out by an Occupational Therapist who has then recommended a permanent adaptation to your home. If you are assessed as requiring a major adaptation, the Occupational Therapist will submit their recommendation to the Aberdeenshire Council's Care & Repair Service.

Your adaptation will be considered in order of priority. The priorities are assigned according to risk and are based on [eligibility criteria](#) for Social Work Services. Only referrals where a client has been deemed as at [critical or substantial risk](#) can be progressed without delay.

3.1.7 Moderate to Low Risk

If you have been assessed as being at [moderate or low risk](#), grant funding will not automatically be available and is subject to funding being available. If your assessed needs fall into this category, you will be referred to Aberdeenshire Council's Care & Repair Service for further support or assistance or signposted to any other agencies that may be able to offer financial support or advice.

This means that it is not possible to set a timescale for your adaptation to be completed unless your situation is assessed as being at critical or substantial risk.

3.2 Alternative Housing Options

Occasionally, it may not be possible or feasible to adapt your home. This may be due to high cost to adapt your property or your property being 'hard to adapt' in relation to space and functionality. This may only become apparent after we have investigated the options available but in cases whereby the cost is deemed excessive, we may recommend that you consider alternative housing options and with your consent we can provide additional information and advice.

If you would like help to consider your options and make an informed decision about whether to move or not we have prepared this leaflet which helps you to critically think about your home and your future ability to live in it. Information and housing advice to people with disabilities or long-term health conditions.

3.3 Assistance with Reinstatement of Works

If a homeowner requires assistance with the reinstatement of a property which has previously been adapted, Aberdeenshire Council Care & Repair can provide information, advice and practical assistance with organising this work such as sourcing contractors, obtaining estimates and sign posting to suitable lending sources. Financial assistance to reinstate adapted properties is not available. By adapting your home, we are increasing the amount of housing stock that is accessible for people with a disability.

3.4 When assistance might be withdrawn

If you move or sell the property while work is being carried out the grant may not be payable. If you do not ensure that work is carried out in accordance with the agreed specification which detail the costs covered by grant, then the grant may not be payable.

3.5 Appeals Process

You have the right to appeal if you do not agree with the amount of grant offered or if the grant is refused or withdrawn. You can do this by submitting a written appeal to the Head of Service for Housing & Building Standards.

Appendix 1

Service provided	Service	Website Address	Contact Details
<p>Occupational Therapy Service is part of Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership and helps people of all ages with practical support to manage their health and well-being,</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Council Occupational Therapists</p>	<p>https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/living-independently/ot</p>	<p>Occupational Therapy Referral Point</p> <p>Tel: 0845 608 1206</p> <p>customer.services@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</p>
<p>Minor or simple adaptations which require minimal disruption to the structure of your home. They are readily available off-the-shelf solutions, such as grab rails beside the toilet, bath or elsewhere, additional banister rails, rails at the steps to your main door</p>	<p>Minor adaptations</p>	<p>https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/living-independently/ot/ot-adaptations</p>	<p>Online referral via web site</p> <p>Alternatively you can print and complete a paper minor adaptations application form (PDF 248KB).</p> <p>You can also request a form by contacting us on 03456 08 12 06.</p>
<p>A free service to owner–occupiers and tenants of private landlords who live within Aberdeenshire, offering information, advice and practical assistance with repairs, improvements and adaptations.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Council Care & Repair</p>	<p>http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/careandrepair</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Council Care & Repair</p> <p>Tel: 01467 534753</p> <p>E-mail: careandrepair@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</p>
<p>Provides households with independent, free and</p>	<p>SCARF</p>	<p>www.scarf.org.uk/</p>	<p>SCARF 1 Cotton Street Aberdeen</p>

impartial advice on energy efficiency.			AB11 5EE Tel: 01224 213005 E-mail: info@scarf.org.uk
General advice on house condition, enforcement and responsibilities	Aberdeenshire Council. Infrastructure Services. (Environmental Health)	https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/environment/environmental-health/contact-environmental-health	Aberdeenshire Council Environmental Health Tel: 01467 539539 E-mail: environmental@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
Assessment of private water supplies.	Aberdeenshire Council. Infrastructure Services. (Environmental Health.)	www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/environment/environmental-protection/Private-Water-Supplies/	Aberdeenshire Council Environmental Health Tel: 01467 539539 E-mail: environmental@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
Deal with housing that does not meet the Tolerable Standard	Aberdeenshire Council. Infrastructure Services. (Environmental Health.)	www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/building-standards/dangerous-and-defective-buildings/	Aberdeenshire Council Environmental Health Tel: 01467 539539 E-mail: environmental@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
A charitable organisation that offers advice and information to people with disabilities about their housing options.	Houseability	http://www.houseability.org.uk/	Housing Advisor Tel – 07940 958 929 Email: info@houseability.org.uk
A Charity providing advice on all aspects of Housing	Shelter Scotland	http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/	Shelter Scotland 4 th floor, Scotiabank House 6 South Charlotte Street Edinburgh EH2 4AW Help and advice line: 0808 8004444

			Email info@shelter.org.uk
Home fire safety visits	Scottish Fire and Rescue (SFRS)	https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/	
Income maximisation and financial help.	Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	https://www.cas.org.uk/	https://www.cas.org.uk/
Help with benefits and grants.	The Aberdeenshire Council Money and Benefits Advice Team (ASAT)	https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/	The team are available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm by: Email: asat@aberdeenshire.gov.uk Phone: 03456 08 12 00 Letter: PO Box 18533, Inverurie, AB51 5WX
National Charity for older people.	Age UK (Scotland)	https://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/	Help line 0800 12 44 222
Short term support to people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or having difficulty maintaining a tenancy to help resolve a crisis and improve skills and confidence.	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Support	https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/housing-support/	hosupport@aberdeenshire.gov.uk Tel 01467 538125
Information about groups and services in your local area	ALISS - A Local Information System for Scotland	www.aliss.org	
Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants	Scottish Welfare Fund	https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/scottish-welfare-fund	Online via links above or Tel 01467 53744

Website to search for Charitable and educational grants	Turn2us	<u>Search for charitable and educational grants - Turn2us</u>	

Aberdeenshire's Administrative Areas



The six administrative areas of Aberdeenshire Council are:

- Banff & Buchan
- Buchan
- Formartine
- Garioch
- Marr
- Kincardine & Mearns

Appendix 3 - Glossary of Terms Used

Term	Definition
Adaptations	Alterations to homes of homeowners or tenants with particular needs or disabilities, which allow them to remain in their existing accommodation.
Below Tolerable Standard (BTS)	This is a technical definition contained in housing law and relates to standard amenities and the structural stability of a building. A building is deemed to be BTS if it does not have certain features. For example, an internal toilet.
Common Repairs	Repairs to the common areas of tenement or multi-storey type property. The cost of which is often shared among the owners.
Housing (Scotland) Act 2006	The Act aims to improve the quality of private housing. It applies to both owner occupied and private rented sector housing.
Scottish House Condition Survey	The largest house condition survey carried out in Scotland by the Scottish Government. It is the only national survey to consider the physical condition of homes as well as the experiences of householders.
Scottish Housing Quality Standard	This was introduced by the Scottish Government. It defines what constitutes acceptable good quality housing. Local authorities have until 2015 to meet the standard.
Standard Amenity	A standard amenity is a sink with satisfactory supply of hot and cold water, a water closet for exclusive use of the occupant within the house which is suitably located and a fixed bath or a shower, each with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water within the house which is suitably located.
Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004	The Act aims to ensure that communal parts of a building are kept in good repair. It sets up a decision making structure that should make it easier to carry out repairs and maintenance and deal with disagreements between owners. It means that the repairs may be carried out with the majority of owners in agreement.

Appendix 4 - List of Housing Offices

Banff housing office

34 Low Street

Banff

AB45 1AY

[View the Banff housing office on a map](#)

Fraserburgh housing office

Faithlie Centre

1 Saltoun Square

Fraserburgh

AB43 9AD

[View the Fraserburgh office on a map](#)

Peterhead housing office

Buchan House

St Peter Street

Peterhead

AB42 1QF

[View the Peterhead office on a map](#)

Stonehaven housing office

Viewmount

Arduthie Road

Stonehaven

AB39 2DQ

[View the Stonehaven office on a map](#)

You can also email Housing on housing@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or telephone the Contact Centre on **0345 608 1203**