

FORTH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED
ADAPTATIONS POLICY

Code: HM11

Approved: June 2020

Next review: June 2023

Cross reference: HM 03 Allocations Policy



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FORTH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

ADAPTATIONS POLICY

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Forth recognises that housing which meets peoples' needs can have a positive impact on health and contribute to independence, privacy and dignity.
- 1.2 This policy concentrates on Stage 3 adaptations, which are classified as work being undertaken to a property to suit the changing needs of the existing tenant. The aim of the policy is to ensure that the provision of adaptations is effective and based on assessed needs, to enhance the quality of life of tenants and/or household members. The policy applies only to tenants/household members. Sharing owners/shared equity should contact Stirling council direct to enquire about any funding which may be available to them.

2 Defining disability

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010 uses a "medical model" of disability and defines disability as follows:
"if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' adverse effect on your ability to do normal daily activities."
 - 'substantial' is more than minor or trivial - e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
 - 'long-term' means 12 months or more - e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection
- 2.2 This policy follows good practice guidance and uses a "social model" of disability defined as:
"The loss or limitation of opportunities that prevents people who have impairments from taking part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers."

3 Defining adaptations

- 3.1 Scottish Government guidance describes equipment and adaptations as a range of products and changes to the building that enable people who are affected by ill-health, traumatic injury, disability or the effects of aging to carry out ordinary activities of daily life. It includes assistive technology, but not anything that is invasive to the body.
- 3.2 **Temporary adaptations** are those that may be removed from the property or redeployed when no longer required by the person for whom they were

provided. The funding of temporary adaptations, including temporary metal ramps, track hoists and stair lifts is the responsibility of Stirling Council.

- 3.3 **Permanent adaptations** are those that are intended to remain in the property and relate to alterations to the structure of the property. They are funded by Forth (subject to resource availability, including Scottish Government grant) and are classified as minor or major. Forth is also responsible for the maintenance of permanent adaptations.
- 3.4 **Minor adaptations** are defined as a change that does not affect the overall structure of the dwelling e.g. handrails, lever handles, over bath showers.
- 3.5 **Major adaptations** are defined as permanent structural changes to the dwelling e.g. widening doors, installation of a through lift, wet floor bathrooms and extensions added to the property.
- 3.6 Appendix 1 gives examples of temporary and permanent adaptations.

4 Funding Arrangements

- 4.1 A bid for funding for Stage 3 adaptations will be made to the Scottish Government each year. The amount of funding requested will be based on any known (outstanding) referrals and the actual value of adaptations carried out in the previous financial years.
- 4.2 Once funding is approved, Forth will carry out Stage 3 adaptations until the level of expenditure reaches the level of funding approved by the government. A request for additional funding will be made as part of the Scottish Government's annual spending review if funding is exhausted and referrals for adaptations are outstanding.
- 4.3 If additional funding is not forthcoming from the Scottish Government, Forth will cease to process further adaptations until funding is available.

5 Referral process

- 5.1 The adaptation process begins with the needs of our tenant or household member being identified. In the event that the request is in relation to a household member, they must have been registered with Forth as a member of the tenant's household for the preceding 12 months.
- 5.2 The initial enquiry can be made directly by the tenant, a carer or relative, a GP/NHS staff, by another agency acting on the tenants behalf or by Forth staff.
- 5.3 Requests for minor adaptations, as identified in the Minor Adaptations Procedure, can be approved by Housing Services Officers.
- 5.4 Tenants may directly contact a Stirling Council Occupational Therapist (OT) or will be advised by a member of Forth's Housing Services staff how best to do so.

- 5.5 An OT will normally arrange to visit a tenant's home and assess their situation. Where a permanent adaptation to a home is required the OT will then contact Forth's Housing Services staff to advise the type of adaptation required and the priority attached to the request.
- 5.6 Adaptation requests will be prioritised into the following categories:
- Critical** where the tenant or household member is unable to discharge from hospital, they or their carer are at risk of injury or health deterioration whilst carrying out daily living or there is an immediate risk of the home situation breaking down.
- Substantial** where the tenant or household member is unable to meet their personal care needs, the adaptation will reduce the burden of care for carers and maintain the situation on an ongoing basis or intervention is required to facilitate rehab/development needs.
- 5.7 Requests for other adaptations, which do not achieve the above levels of priority, will not be considered for funding.

6 Decisions making process

- 6.1 Upon receipt of a referral, Forth's staff will consider the request and liaise with the OT and tenant to obtain sufficient clarification regarding requirements etc. to allow an appropriate decision to be made.
- 6.2 In accordance with the Equality Act legislation, Forth will take reasonable steps to ensure that our properties are adapted to suit the needs of disabled people. For adaptations under £5,000 we generally accept the judgement of GPs/NHS staff and OTs about the nature of a disability and adaptations required.
- 6.3 However, where higher cost work would be needed to meet the disabled person's needs we will carry out a holistic option appraisal. This should assess whether alternative housing options would provide a better long term solution for the individual and deliver value for money to Forth.
- 6.4 Forth recognises that due to ill health, physical difficulties and other ailments, some tenants/family members would benefit from having a wet floor shower in their homes. Consequently, Forth shall take a view on the installation of such showers on their merits.

However, given that wet floor showers are normally requested on the grounds of physical incapacity or infirmity, Forth will not install a wet floor shower in a two storey property or in a flat above ground level.

- 6.5 An option appraisal must always take place where the OTs assessment indicates that works with a potential value over £5,000 are required, or where the property may not be suitable for the proposed adaptation for other reasons (e.g. where it is not technically possible to carry out the adaptation process).
- 6.6 An option appraisal should always involve the OT, the tenant/household member (if appropriate) and any carers.
- 6.7 Forth will make a decision on carrying out an adaptation within 10 days of the receipt of the request.
- 6.8 Where insufficient funds from the government mean that any adaptation is likely to be delayed for any period over 6 months, this information will be clearly provided to the tenant and OT. This information will provide an estimate regarding when funding may become available.
- 6.9 Where insufficient funds from the government mean that we cannot process any further adaptation requests, all referrals will be held on a waiting list until additional funding is received from the Scottish Government. Position on the waiting list will be based on the eligibility criteria (critical or substantial) and date received.
- 6.10 In the event that Forth receives a request for a critical adaptation when there is no longer any Scottish Government funding left, a report will be submitted to the Management Committee seeking approval to finance and undertake the adaptation.
- 6.11 Where a tenant is dissatisfied with any decision taken by Forth in relation to an adaptation request, they can appeal against this decision by utilising the Association's complaints procedure. Information regarding the complaints procedure can be obtained from any member of Forth's staff or via a leaflet available from the downloads section of our web site at www.forthha.org.uk.

7 Allocations

- 7.1 The allocation of homes is covered by Forth's Allocations Policy.
- 7.2 Where properties have been built and/or permanently adapted to meet the specialist needs of a disabled person, every effort will be made to identify applicants whose household will benefit from the existing facilities. However if no suitable applicant can be identified the property will be allocated as adapted and removal of the adaptations will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, or where an OT assessment indicates that they are detrimental to a household member following assessment.
- 7.3 Any re-let allocation can only proceed following receipt of written confirmation from the prospective tenant that they wish to accept the new home in its existing condition and accept the constraints regarding adaptations.
- 7.4 In general we will not approve a waiting list allocation, nomination, internal transfer or mutual exchange where it will create an immediate requirement for

adaptations expenditure. Forth expects to allocate properties that are suitable for the applicants needs and therefore no adaptations will be accepted for a period of 12 months following the allocation unless the person needing the adaptation has had a substantial change in medical circumstances.

- 7.5 In general we will not approve an adaptation request for a new built property during the 12 month defect period unless the person needing the adaptation has had a substantial change in medical circumstances.

8 Reporting and Monitoring

- 8.1 A report will be presented to the Management Committee on a quarterly basis highlighting information as detailed below:
- Number of adaptations completed
 - Total expenditure
 - Average completion time

9 Review

- 9.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years by the Management Committee and staff are responsible for ensuring that it meets legal and good practice requirements.

Types of Adaptation

The following are examples, not an exhaustive list, of permanent and temporary adaptations

Permanent adaptations

- extensions or alterations to provide bathroom, WC or bedroom etc., with level or suitably ramped access
- widening of garden paths
- wheelchair accessible kitchens
- carport and/or undercover access to the dwelling if practicable
- remote control garage door opener to existing garage used by (or for) a disabled driver
- modification of steps, for example to widen treads or incorporate half-steps or create ramp
- handrails or balustrading to ramps/steps (and elsewhere in the dwelling where necessary)
- doorcall and entryphone system
- widening or re-hanging of doors to permit wheelchair manoeuvre
- substitution of sliding or bi-fold doors for side-hung doors
- suitable ironmongery, for example level in place of knob handles, pull handles and rails to doors or kicking plates and/or protective edging to door frames and handing stiles
- remote control window and/or door openers; conversion of window to French window where no other wheelchair access to the garden is available
- alterations to windows to give satisfactory sight-lines for people in wheelchairs
- larger windows for visually impaired people
- additional handrail to staircase or gate at head or foot of stairs
- vertical homelift or hoist
- substitution of lever for screwdown taps
- re-fixing of taps at convenient level
- remote control valves for taps
- thermostatic control for shower
- relocation of control valve for mains water supply
- re-fixing for socket outlets at a convenient level, additional socket outlets or rocker light switches
- alarm call or loud bell for people who are hard of hearing
- relocation of prepayment meters or of thermostat or heating controls
- central heating, or supplementary radiators to existing installation
- fluorescent lights in kitchen, bathroom and working areas for visually impaired people
- warning systems for people who are hard of hearing, for example, flashing lights
- provision of power supply for electric hoists suspended from ceiling track
- relocation of main switches for gas or electricity
- reinforcement of ceilings and provision of track for personal hoist
- letter cages or delivery shelf
- relocation of clothes hanging rails
- alterations to provide fixed storage units, worktops and sink units at convenient levels

-  non-slip flooring
-  built in cooker for use by disabled person
-  waste disposal unit to sink
-  shower unit in place of, or to supplement, bath
-  shower cubicle, special bath, special WC fixture, suitable washbasin and/or bidet
-  raising of WC fixture
-  sluice sink
-  fixed bath hoist
-  support rails to walls by bath or WC, or other fixed support or non-slip flooring
-  platform at head of bath

Temporary adaptations

-  track hoist (ceiling)- hoist & sling only
-  stair lift
-  grab rails
-  safety gates
-  moveable or metal ramp