



# Adaptations Policy

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**Author(s)**

C Cameron - Housing Service Development Worker

E Ritchie – Strategic Lead – Housing and Communities

M Smith – Service Manager (Housing)

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# Introduction



Perth and Kinross Council's Housing Service recognises that several of its tenants will require adaptations to their homes to provide an enhanced quality of life and allow them to continue to live more comfortably and independently in their homes for as long as possible. This policy relates to Perth and Kinross Council tenancies only. Homeowners/Private Rented Tenants should contact the Care and Repair Team for further assistance. Those renting from a Registered Social Landlord (Housing Association) should contact their landlord for further assistance.

Adaptations make properties more accessible and usable for people to allow them to cope with advancing age, disability or caring responsibilities and thereby enable them to maximise their independence in their own home.

Perth and Kinross Council are committed to carrying out adaptations to properties which comply with the criteria set out in this policy and with those included in the Council's other relevant policies and procedures, and guidance from the Scottish Government, Occupational Therapy, and The Scottish Housing Regulator. Perth and Kinross Council will ensure compliance with all Legislation relevant to this Policy.

Legislation relevant to this Policy includes:

The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968  
Chronically Sick & Disabled Person (Scotland) Act 1972

Disability Discrimination Act 2005  
The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006

Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation & Representation) 1986  
Human Rights Act 1988  
Disability Discrimination Act 1995  
Building Standards (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2001

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010  
Equality Act 2010  
The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014  
The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

# Aims and Objectives



The aims and objectives of the Housing Service's Adaptations Policy are as follows:

- Enhance the quality of life for tenants by contributing to housing adaptations and maximising the availability of housing for people with diverse needs.
- Ensure adaptations are carried out effectively and efficiently within a reasonable timescale, where possible.
- Ensure economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity in the delivery of the adaptations service.
- Ensure effective joint working with the Scottish Government, contractors, Health & Social Care partners and other relevant agencies in the delivery of the adaptations service.
- Involve tenants and carers in the decision-making process regarding adaptations and ensure their views are considered.
- Establish adequate funding arrangements to ensure that adaptation needs are met and ensure that those properties not covered by the funding are included in the annual budget.
- Develop robust management information systems for monitoring and reporting performance in the Annual Return on the Charter.
- Seek feedback from tenants, through our consultation and engagement methods to ensure the service we provide continues to meet their needs.

# Adaptations: Criteria



All requests to install an adaptation will be assessed against housing need and suitability of the property for the needs of the family. In some cases, rehousing will be the most cost-effective and practical solution. We will support a housing move to an accessible property where appropriate in preference to substantially adapting an existing property.

To be eligible for an adaptation to a Council property, the tenant must have a referral from an Occupational Therapist or a Trained Assessor.

When deciding to carry out adaptations, the Housing Service will take into account:

- If the tenant has a current housing application and the level of priority they have and likelihood of an offer of housing being made.
- If the current property is and would be suitable for the tenant and their family – i.e. it has the right number of bedrooms, they are not overcrowded etc.
- the adaptability of the current property.
- existing adaptations in the property.
- the cost of adaptations necessary to make the property suitable.
- the availability of the tenant's existing support network and carers.

In all cases, the assistance offered under this policy will be the most cost-effective solution that will meet the needs of the tenant. For example, if an alternative, suitable property will be available within a reasonable timescale, the tenant will be expected to move to that property. If a tenant refuses to move, the Council will not be obliged to complete the adaptation(s) required to the tenant's home when suitable, alternative accommodation has been made available.

If the property is currently under-occupied this would be a factor which will be considered when considering adaptations for the property. This may mean it is more likely that we will focus on alternative housing as a solution rather than an adaptation.

If the tenant is considering a Mutual Exchange, an Occupational Therapist will assess whether the property that the tenant wants to move to meets their needs or could be adapted and if the current property has been adapted previously. All options available to the tenant will be discussed with them and any supporting agencies prior to any decisions being made.



Once a decision has been made, it will be communicated to the tenant whether their application has been successful or not. Where it has been unsuccessful, suitable advice on alternative options regarding housing options will be provided.



To establish whether the person meets the requirement for major or minor adaptations under this policy, Occupational Therapy will carry out an assessment. Adaptations will only be provided where these are assessed as **essential**.

However, equipment might be provided if this meets the needs of the person.

In April of each year, two budgets are allocated for adaptations. The Occupational Therapy Service has a budget which covers staffing costs for adaptations work, purchase of equipment and maintenance of existing equipment. The second budget is held by the Property (Housing) Capital Projects & New Builds team and is an Adaptations budget which covers costs to complete adaptations.

Regular budget meetings take place with the Housing Management Team to monitor spend, effectiveness and impact.

In the following circumstances it may not be reasonable or practical for equipment to be provided and/or adaptations to be carried out:

- the adaptation required is not suitable in the property (for example: properties with narrow doors and stairways and passages which might make wheelchair use in and around the dwelling difficult, or with limited access e.g. steep flights of steps making access for wheelchair use difficult and therefore make continued occupation of the dwelling open to question).
- where there is a single person or a couple occupying a family house with more bedrooms than needed for sleeping purposes. We will prioritise rehousing for people in this position, however we will retain the ability to consider exceptional circumstances for the adaptation.
- where there are competing needs of different members of the family which cannot be met in that particular property. We will prioritise rehousing for people in this position, however we will retain the ability to consider exceptional circumstances for the adaptation.
- access ramps that will adversely affect the amenity of the area for other tenants and residents.
- where the Council has a Notice of Proceedings in place, for example, rent arrears.

# Priority Levels



If the application for an adaptation is successful, Perth and Kinross Council has 3 levels of priority (extreme, urgent and high).

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF SITUATION
<b>P1. Extreme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tenant is unable to be discharged from hospital without the adaptation.</li><li>• Tenant is at high risk of admission/readmission to hospital or care home.</li><li>• Tenant /carer at risk in carrying out essential activities of daily living-need for immediate support</li><li>• Tenant is terminally ill.</li></ul>
<b>P2. Urgent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tenant is unable to consistently manage essential activities of daily living-need.</li><li>• To prevent the breakdown of the home situation and reduce possible hospital admission.</li><li>• To help facilitate hospital discharge.</li></ul>
<b>P3. High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To promote independence.</li><li>• To maintain/prevent deterioration of the Tenant's condition and to promote functional improvement.</li></ul>

Where a tenant requires a variety of adaptations to meet their needs, the urgency of provision may differ for each adaptation and therefore should be prioritised separately and passed to the Housing Service as separate referrals/requests.

However, this should be discussed with the Housing Technical Officer prior to proceeding.

If a tenant has an active/open housing application for re-housing, then the Housing Service may refuse to fund any major or minor adaptations, if it is likely the tenant will move to another property. The assessing worker has a responsibility of explaining this to the tenant and should consider other temporary/short term solutions if possible.

Where an application is unsuccessful, the tenant should be referred to the Housing Options Team to support them to explore other options that may be better suited to meet their needs.





Types of adaptations that may be completed following an assessment of need and a recommendation by an OT or approved assessor include:

- External Handrails
- Modular Ramps
- Widening Paths
- Paved Areas
- Alterations to Steps
- Outdoor Lighting
- Fencing (Where essential only for a child with behavioural/safety needs and based on supporting evidence from a qualified practitioner)
- Widening/rehanging Doors
- Lowering Thresholds
- Special Doors e.g. bifold, sliding, low access
- Windows and window Ironmongery (Safety locks/alternative levers)
- Over bath showers
- Wet Floor Showers
- Alterations to bathroom fittings/layout
- Adaptations to kitchens
- Installation and repositioning of Power Points
- Repositioning of light switches
- Internal lighting for visually impaired people
- Strengthening of ceilings for tracking hoists
- Strengthening of walls for rails
- Securing of internal grab rails
- Provision and securing of internal banisters.

Please note, that this list is not exhaustive.

# Minor Adaptations



Adaptations on the agreed list of permanent adaptations are installed and funded by the Housing Service from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) following referral by an approved assessor.

An approved assessor may be an Occupational Therapist, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Social Worker, Social Work Assistant or Community Care Assistant.

The approved assessor will visit the tenant and carry out an assessment of need. If the need for an adaptation is identified the approved assessor will submit an adaptation request on ELMS (Equipment Loan Management System).

The request should give clear instruction of the adaptation required and a clear indication of the priority of need. The referrer should indicate on ELMS the level of prioritisation and reason for the request.

Occupational Therapy Admin will automatically forward a referral to the Property (Housing) Capital Projects & New Builds Team.

If in any doubt regarding the content of the request, the approved assessor may seek guidance from the Occupational Therapy Team Leader or Occupational Therapy Senior Practitioner.

The approved assessor will visit/telephone on completion of the work to check that the adaptation meets the tenant's needs.

# Major Adaptations



An Occupational Therapist (OT)/Occupational Therapist Assessor (OTA) are the only practitioners permitted to submit referrals for major adaptations on behalf of a tenant (following an assessment) and will have undergone the appropriate training.

If the need for an adaptation is identified the OT/OTA will submit an adaptation request on ELMS (Equipment Loan Management System).

The request should give clear instruction of the adaptation required and a clear indication of the priority of need.

The OT/OTA will be required to complete a Justification Report to be submitted on ELMS (along with their referral) for presentation at the OT Equipment and Adaptations Panel. The OT Panel will discuss the request and look at clinical reasoning for the major adaptation.

If the recommendation for the major adaptation is approved by the OT Panel, then OT Admin will automatically forward a referral to the Property (Housing) Capital Projects and New Builds Team.

If the major adaptation is not approved by the OT Panel, the assessing worker will be informed of the reason why to allow them to inform the tenant and for them to discuss alternatives including rehousing with them.

The OT/OTA will visit on completion of the work to check that the adaptation meets the tenant's needs.

# Timescales & Budget Monitoring



## **Timescales**

We are committed to implementing the adaptations that our tenants require in a timely manner.

Waiting list times are subject to change at any time due to demand and the availability of funding, contractor availability and the Priority Level of the adaptation.

Please note that installation work is prioritised and allocated according to the needs of each tenant.

## **Budget Monitoring**

Adaptations in Council properties are funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This budget is set annually and monitored by the budget holder within Property (Housing) Capital Projects & New Builds. It should be noted that HRA funding is ring-fenced for use only in Council homes.

In the case that the budget has been exhausted, we will seek where possible to find other sources of funding. However, this is not always possible. If there is insufficient budget remaining, adaptation requests will be held on a waiting list with only extreme cases being considered. Delays and the use of the waiting list will be discussed with OT to ensure resources are targeted effectively and limit any further impact on tenants' health and wellbeing.

# The Scottish Social Housing Charter



## **The Scottish Social Housing Charter**

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) is responsible for monitoring the performance of social landlords through the Scottish Social Housing Charter (The Charter).

The Charter sets out the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should be aiming to achieve for their customers.

The SHR also monitors the SHQS progress from statistical returns from social landlords, Annual Charter Return, and publishes data on the performance of all social landlords.

We also monitor our performance and approach to medical adaptations through the following:

- Information from Occupational Therapists and other Health Professionals
- Investigating all complaints
- Undertaking investigations and reviews of cases to identify any lessons learnt and service improvements.
- Using feedback received from tenants or other stakeholders

# Equalities Statement



In accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (General Equality Duty), Perth and Kinross Council has a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics, under Equalities legislation, include race, disability, religion or belief, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital status, or pregnancy. Under the Fairer Scotland Duty we must also actively consider how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions.

This Adaptations policy complies with the Council's Equality Policy. We will review our Adaptations policy and associated policies and procedures at appropriate intervals for their equal opportunities implications, taking appropriate action to address inequalities likely to result or resulting from the implementation of the policy and procedures.

We will monitor this policy to ensure it meets good practice and current legislation and will review it in accordance with our review timetable for all policies, this is normally every three years or when there is a change in legislation, whichever comes sooner.

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000

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You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.