

APPENDIX 1

ADAPTATION OF HOMES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Housing (Scotland) 2006 Act to provide a minimum of 80% grant funding for adaptations to provide an occupant with a disability with the Standard Amenities suitable for their purpose. This statutory duty extends to tenants within the private rental sector. The aim is to assist homeowners or private tenants to remain independent and living within their own homes and within the community in which they are familiar and supported. This grant is referred to as a 'Mandatory' grant and is restricted by the type and amount of work required to meet the needs of the occupant being assessed.

While striving to assist owners in maintaining their independence, Aberdeen City Council (ACC) and Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP) are mindful of the Scottish Government's belief that owners have a personal responsibility for their own housing. We have therefore attempted to reflect this within our package of assistance whilst, at the same time, trying to ease the additional financial burden that disability can bring. We have also addressed the issue of assistance, where it is required, for those living with disability through mental ill health as well as physical disability. For this reason, the package of assistance will be tailored to suit the individual needs of each applicant and a range of additional discretionary grants, budget permitting, may be offered.

ACC and ACHSCP acknowledge that there are insufficient homes that are accessible to those individuals with a disability living in the city. With this in mind, neither ACC or ACHSCP will be encouraging any adapted properties to be reinstated once no longer required by the current occupant. Grant aid to do so will only be provided to do this in exceptional circumstances. In the private rental market, the first option will be to try and match suitable tenants to vacant adapted properties.

Assessment of Circumstances

- ACC and ACHSCP view adaptations to property of those individuals with a disability as only one element of an overall support package. To fulfil this view, all applications for assistance to provide adaptations to private sector housing will be based on an assessment of need which will be carried out by a member of staff from Occupational Therapy Services, Bon Accord Care.
- Where appropriate, the Occupational Therapy staff will transfer their responsibility to carry out an assessment to another appropriate professional body and/or seek a reference from an appropriate professional.
- The Occupational Therapy staff will apply the following qualifying criteria for access to equipment and adaptations:

(i)The person for whom the equipment/adaptation is being considered must be a disabled person. Disability is defined in legislation as:

"A person has a disability if:

*The person has a physical or mental impairment, and

* The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities." (Equality Act 2010)

Circumstances may occasionally occur where provision of equipment/adaptation is necessary to overcome temporary disability.

Where appropriate, the disabled person will receive rehabilitation or training in alternative techniques to carry out daily living activities, rather than to rely on equipment/adaptations.

The purpose of providing equipment or undertaking an adaptation is to increase or maintain the independence of a person with substantial or long-term disabilities. The form of provision will be dependent on the individual's needs in relation to the disability and the technical feasibility of the site.

1. Account will be taken of preferences expressed by the applicant. The occupational therapist should seek agreement about the type of provision with them, their carer(s) and, if relevant, other members of the household or other agencies e.g. the GP or District Nurse.
2. Equipment and adaptations are provided in the most cost-effective way. Where an individual wishes a more expensive solution they, or a third party, would be expected to fund the difference.
3. Equipment and adaptations fall within the scope of Self-directed Support. Eligible individuals may therefore choose to receive a cash payment towards the purchase of equipment/adaptations, in lieu of their provision. For further details please refer to later section, 'Relevant Legislation', <http://www.selfdirectedsupportscotland.org.uk/>, or contact the ACHSCP's Self Directed Support Team on tel.01224 523837 or e-mail SDSHelpline@aberdeencity.gov.uk
4. Payment will only be processed, however, following the provision of a valid receipt and evidence that the alternative provision meets the identified need.
5. The needs of a carer will also be considered when providing any equipment or planning the adaptation.
6. Equal opportunities: ethnic and cultural aspects of the household will be considered. As part of the assessment, the usual practices of the family will be established. It may be necessary to consult with appropriate cultural groups, (e.g. Grampian Regional Equality Council, Aberdeen City Council Equalities Team or Aberdeen City Council Ethnic Minority Forum).

Requesting an Assessment

To request an assessment for assistance to adapt your home you can contact the Occupational Therapy Service, or, you can ask your GP, District Nurse, Health Visitor or other health or social care professional to contact the service on your behalf via: -

Triage Occupational Therapy Point
Hillylands Independent Living Centre
2 Croft Road
ABERDEEN
AB16 6RB

Telephone: 01224 666360

E-Mail: OTDuty@bonaccordcare.org

Opening Times: Monday – Friday 9.00am –5.00pm

The information received by the service will be recorded and prioritised in line with eligibility criteria. You will be advised as to the approximate waiting time for an assessment. Should your circumstances change in the interim period, you should report this to the Occupational Therapy Service so that your case can be re-evaluated. The time frame for carrying out initial occupational therapy assessment is as follows: -

PRIORITY 1 – Critical Risk – first contact within 48 hours Indicates that there are major risks to an individual's independent living or health and well-being and likely to call for the immediate or imminent provision of social care services.

PRIORITY 2 – Substantial Risk (High) – first contact within 6 weeks
Indicates that there are significant risks to an individual's independence or health and wellbeing and likely to call for immediate or imminent provision of social care services.

PRIORITY 3 – Moderate Risk (Medium) – first contact within 6 months
Indicates that there are some risks to an individual's independence or health and wellbeing. These may call for the provision of some social care services managed and prioritised on an on-going basis or they may simply be manageable for the foreseeable future without service provision, with appropriate arrangements for review.

PRIORITY 4 – Low Risk (Low) – referral passed to Hillylands Independent Living Centre for advice and any preventative interventions. Indicates that there may be some quality of life issues, but low risk to an individual's independence or health and wellbeing, with very limited, if any, requirement for the provision of social care services. There may be some need for alternative support or advice and appropriate arrangement for review over the foreseeable future or longer term.

Appeal Process

On completion of your assessment you will be advised by the Occupational Therapist of what assistance can be provided. If you are dissatisfied with the offer of assistance made to you by the Occupational Therapist who carried out your assessment, you can ask for a second opinion. In this event, a Senior Occupational Therapist will arrange to carry out a second assessment.

Should you still be dissatisfied with this result, you may make a formal complaint. The Occupational Therapist will give you full details on how to do this either in writing or in person.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman(PSO)

The PSO is the final stage for complaints about organisations providing public services in Scotland. You should only utilise this service once you have exhausted the Council's own complaints procedure. www.pso.org.uk

Tel 0800 377 7330

Text 0790 049 4372

Fax 0800 377 7331

[Email ask@psso.org.uk](mailto:ask@psso.org.uk)

Type of Assistance

The assessment aims to identify needs, decide what level of priority applies and agree how best to meet that need. The support available through the SoA is concerned with the home of the individual and may be in the form of;

- advice on alternative accommodation
- equipment for use in the home
- adaptations to the existing home
- referral on to other appropriate agencies

If the applicant is assessed as meeting the criteria for grant assistance to carry out adaptation work to their home, The use of the following grants will be considered: -

Mandatory Grant

A mandatory grant will fund a minimum of 80% of the full cost of work or in some cases cover the cost in full. The grant is only to be used to fund adaptations that provide the assessed occupant with standard amenities (see below), or adaptations to the structure of their home, which are assessed as suitable to their particular needs

All applicants assessed as meeting the criteria will qualify for the minimum 80% grant.

Only those applicants who are in receipt of the following Scottish Government prescribed passport benefits will qualify for the maximum 100% grant:

- Income Support
- Pension Credit (guarantee element)
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance (income related)
- Universal Credit

Provision, or adaptation of standard amenities covers the following areas;

- WC
- wash hand basin
- level access shower
- height adjustable bath/showering table
- Clos-O-Mat installations
- Combined shower/toilet installations
- Towards the cost of providing a bathroom external to the main structure of the home, e.g. within a new extension but not including any living accommodation
- Adaptations to kitchen sink (not units), to make accessible to an individual using a wheelchair.
- Alteration to widen door openings, or convert to sliding doors, within the home for the purpose of providing an individual using a wheelchair appropriate access. *(this will not be subject to grant assistance for reinstatement works to landlords)*
- Provision/construction of external ramps and handrails to entrance of home *(this will not be subject to grant assistance for reinstatement works to landlords)*.

Where a property is extended solely to create space for a standard amenity such as a bathroom, the cost will be covered by mandatory grant. Where an extension is used to provide standard amenities and living accommodation, only the element containing the standard amenities will receive mandatory grant.

Discretionary Grant / Assistance

The following equipment and adaptations, subject to available budget could be covered by discretionary grant assistance. Examples of such are;

- provision of internal stair lift to access amenities such as a bathroom, a bedroom or kitchen not on the same floor as the main living accommodation.
- adaptation of kitchen units to make them accessible for an individual using a wheelchair in their home.
- provision of through floor lifts.
- provision of over bath showers.
- provision of ceiling track hoists.
- installation/adaptation of door opening and/or phone entry systems.
- raising or lowering of power points and switches.
- provision of permanent external step lifts to provide access to one of the entrances to the home, and/or including alterations to widen existing paths and steps, *(this will not necessarily be the front door)*.

The following assistance will be subject to availability of funding: -

- Provide 80%, or, 100% if passported, grant funding to carry out adaptations within the home.
- Provide practical assistance to find additional funding from suitable charitable sources for works beyond the grant aided works.

- Assist private landlords by matching potential tenants with specific needs to their adapted property in order to maximise the benefit of the adapted property through the Disabled Persons Housing Service, (DPHS).
- Where a new tenant cannot be matched to the property that was adapted through use of the SoA, then, grant assistance of 80% of the cost of works, to the private landlord in order to reinstate the property to the position prior to the adaptations **MAY** be considered.
- Where reinstatement of a property is deemed appropriate, proof of previous condition prior to execution of adaptation works will be required.
- In all cases advice on scope of works required to reinstate a property that has been adapted for the needs of an individual with a disability, relevant statutory approvals required, and advice on selection of a suitable contractor to execute the works, will be given. No financial assistance will be offered.
- Applicants to the scheme will be referred to the Occupational Therapy Service and given assistance to plan how they wish to progress with any adaptation work. This may be by assisting to directly appoint an Agent or by referring on to the Care & Repair service for further support and assistance. Discretionary grants may be provided for tenants in private rented accommodation on the basis that the tenancy is a secured tenancy with an unlimited period of tenure and provided that the landlord has no liability under the lease to undertake the required adaptations.

Adaptations are provided to meet the of an individual with disabilities and adaptation grants will not normally be repeated within a 10-year period, unless due to a change in of the severity of the disability and its impact on the individual being able to remain living as independently as possible in their own home.

An Overview Of The Disabled Adaptation Grant Process

On completion of the assessment undertaken by the Occupational Therapist, the Private Sector Housing Unit will issue a grant application form to the applicant for completion. If the works require the appointment of a Technical Agent, the Occupational Therapist will advise of this. It is the applicant's responsibility to appoint a Technical Agent. The Agent will usually arrange to prepare and collate the required supporting information which may include technical plans, estimates of cost, specifications, structural engineering reports etc. The Agent's fees for this work will be included in the grant application. If no Agent is involved, the client will submit the grant application form together with the required supporting information. In every case, a copy of the homeowners Title Deeds must be submitted with the grant application form. As soon as all supporting information and documents have been received, the level of grant to be awarded will be determined and written confirmation to the applicant confirming the grant awarded will be issued.

When considering the grant application, the 'approved cost' of the works necessary to provide the adaptation will be determined. Then the application of either an 80% grant or a 100% grant will be approved in respect of this 'approved cost'. The applicant may wish to carry out additional works, which is perfectly acceptable, however no grant will be awarded on these additional works.

It is the applicant's responsibility to complete the works to the current building standard requirements. However prior to any grant payment being made, the Council will visit and inspect the works undertaken for grant purposes only and if they are deemed satisfactory, the grant payment will be issued directly to the applicant, or to a third party if the applicant has signed a grant payment mandate instruction. It is the applicant's (or the third-party) responsibility to, in turn, make payment to the contractor.

The payment of a grant is subject to the deduction of the fee charged to the City Council by the Registers of Scotland to meet the cost of registering the grant payment against the owner's Title Deeds, and applying the following 4 conditions:

- 1. The house must be used as a private dwelling-house (although part may be used for business purposes).*
- 2. If the owner or a member of the owner's family occupy the house, it must be their only or main residence*
- 3. The house must be kept in good repair.*
- 4. The owner, if required to do so, must certify that conditions 1-3 are being observed.*

The grant will be paid subject to the above conditions which will apply to the house for 10 years from the date on which in the Council's opinion the house becomes fit for occupation after the completion of the work. Breach of any of these conditions may result in the grant having to be repaid with interest.

The Private Sector Housing Unit is currently responsible for processing Disabled Adaptation Grant applications and awarding Grants on behalf of ACHSCP. Any query regarding the grant process, grant award, adaptation works, etc. please contact;

Private Sector Housing Unit
Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
Business Hub 1, Lower Ground Floor West,
Marischal College,
Broad Street,
Aberdeen.
AB10 1AB

Tel.01224 522299

E-mail: HMOUnit@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Additional Assistance For Elderly & Disabled Homeowners

Aberdeen City Council fund a Care and Repair Service to provide advice and assistance to older people, people with disabilities and or long-term health problems. The service offers assistance in the form of:

- Advice and Assistance with identifying necessary repairs, maintenance, improvements and adaptations to the home. Assistance with prioritising necessary action, preparing a schedule of work, obtaining quotations from appropriate contractors and overseeing the work
- Small Repairs/Handyperson Services – The service employs qualified tradesmen to carry out essential repairs, minor adaptations and maintenance work to the home.

Costs are set on an annual basis, with a reduced rate offered to those on qualifying benefits

- Affordable Warmth - This service is available to all households in fuel poverty in the private sector to help with repairs to, and installation of energy efficient heating systems and provides assistance with works to reduce energy consumption.
Access to Affordable Warmth loan scheme
- Advice and Assistance (Financial) – assistance to obtain appropriate benefits, accessing any statutory grants, charitable funding (where appropriate)
- Care and Repair (Group) - manages a registered charity which can provide additional safety and security equipment for vulnerable householders

Through Aberdeen Care and Repair there are additional services that can be offered such as the Dementia Enablement Project. Further information can be obtained at www.aberdeencareandrepair.co.uk

Community organisations.

For a list of voluntary organisations, charities and community groups within Aberdeen City that may be able to offer additional advice and or assistance, visit Aberdeen City Council web page: - http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/xcc_CommunityDirectory.asp