



## **Adaptation Policy**

**August 2016  
August 2019**

## This policy applies to

- |   |                                       |  |  |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Link Group         | <input type="checkbox"/> Link Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Link Living   | <input type="checkbox"/> Link Property |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Horizon | <input type="checkbox"/> Larkfield    | <input type="checkbox"/> West Highland | <input type="checkbox"/> Lintel Trust  |

## Policy Summary

Adaptations to tenants' homes are a vital part of Horizon's service delivery, key to meeting our objective of enabling disabled and older people to live independently in homes adapted to enable this. This policy therefore sets out how, and in what circumstances, we will support tenants and other occupants of Horizon properties by the provision of adaptations

## Equalities

This policy fully complies with Link's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

## Privacy

This policy fully complies with the Data Protection Act 1998 and Link's Data Protection Policy

## Policy Owner

Managing Director - Horizon Housing

## Approved by

Horizon Board

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out how, and in what circumstances, Horizon Housing will support tenants and other occupants of its properties by the provision of adaptations. The policy has been developed in support of national and local policies for improving the organisation and delivery of adaptations: these play a vital part in enabling older and disabled people to remain in their own home, independently or with support and care.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of the policy is to facilitate positive responses to the changing needs of people already living in our houses or prospective occupants. It is a component in achieving the aims of related Horizon and Link strategies and complements related policies including:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Tenancy Sustainment strategy
- Sustainability Policy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Allocations Policy
- Design guide

The policy also contributes to achieving many of the outcomes set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. PRINCIPLES

The following principles govern the operation of this policy:

We aim to apply principles agreed at national level for adaptations services:

- 1 Person-centred and outcomes focused approach. This means being led by the person and their family where appropriate, not by rigid positions based on property types, and offering advice early on about options.
- 2 Fair and consistent in application: This means being clear about policy, procedures and prioritization; it does not mean offering everyone the same.
- 3 Promotes inclusion and independent living: Encourages self assessment, enables speedy low cost adaptations, and enhances the accessibility of the property overall.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapting for Change: report of the Scottish Government's Adaptations Working Group: Feb 2013

Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014

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Age, Home and Community: A Strategy for Housing for Scotland's Older People

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Government, 2012, Scottish Social Housing Charter.

4. Transparency and clarity: So that customers and staff can understand costs and prioritization, where this is necessary, and that processes, procedures and decisions are quick and clear.
5. Efficient and offering value for money: a procurement approach that delivers cost efficiency, without compromising individually tailored service provision and that considers how to maximise long term benefit to property accessibility, reletting potential and future adaptability.

### **3. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the policy are that adaptations:

- Are approved and provided quickly;
- Are right for the needs of the individual user and the wider household and/or family and other carers;
- Are of a good quality, easy to use and reliable;
- Are affordable for the user and for Horizon;
- Are evaluated to inform our design guide, asset management and wider business planning.

### **4. APPROACH AND METHOD**

The Horizon Board in its formal approval of the policy acknowledges that it accepts full responsibility for its implementation. Day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this policy lies with the appropriate directors and managers of the Link group of companies. All relevant employees have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied as instructed.

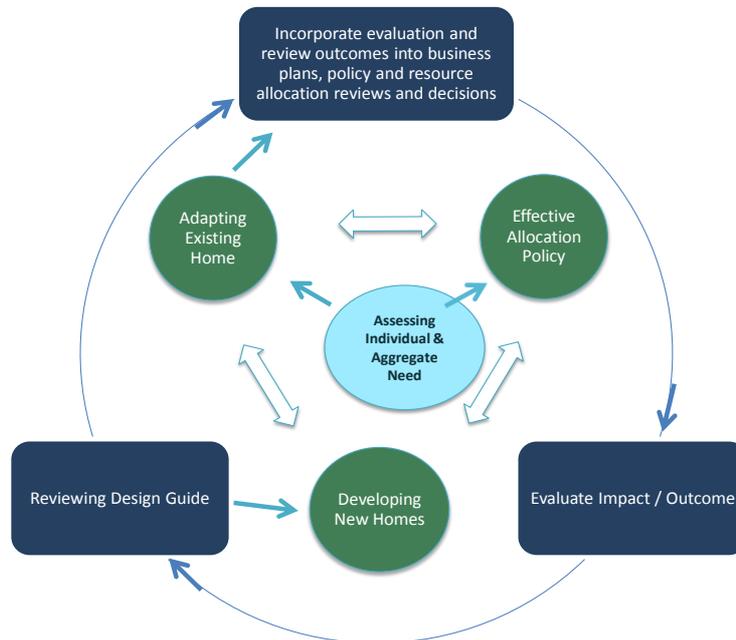
The policy will be implemented using the following approaches:

The policy applies to properties wholly owned by Horizon and to tenants, sharing owners where occupancy agreement or service level agreement includes adaptations services, and to others who live in these properties as part of the household. The policy may therefore benefit people of any age, including children.

The policy mostly affects tenants of existing Horizon property. It also covers circumstances where new housing is being allocated to a household with particular needs and where the completed or nearly completed property requires adaptation to meet needs.

The design guide and asset management strategy address its objectives of achieving excellence in inclusive design and minimising the cost of future adaptations. Outcomes from application of this policy will be used to revise and improve design and specifications where appropriate

The diagram below shows the adaptations policy within Horizon's (forthcoming) strategic asset management framework.



The policy will be implemented using the following approaches:

- Procedures will be centred on the involvement and needs of the user of the adaptations.
- Needs assessment

We shall work with the person (and their family or others as appropriate), occupational therapists, carers and/or other agencies to:

- determine the adaptations needed
- consider risks arising from delaying or not providing adaptations
- plan for progressive conditions
- We will recognize that interim adaptations may be required, and that these should not preclude further adaptations to meet long-term needs.
- Design and specification
- Take into account the assessment and recommendations of relevant professional advisors to the person, generally Occupational Therapists.
- Aim to meet the current and future needs of the person requiring the adaptation

- Where possible, adaptations will be made in ways which improve the overall flexibility of use of the property and its suitability for the diverse needs of future tenants. However, the primary objective will be to provide adaptations to meet the needs of the current user together with other members of the current household.
- We shall specify materials and design details of good quality and for ease of use.
- Options advice
- Where assessed needs and design considerations allow for alternative solutions, we shall help the user to evaluate the options which could be provided in the current property.
- We shall, where appropriate and to enable planning ahead, discuss and advise on other housing options which may be available, whether for reasons of tenure, location, cost, access to support, or unsuitability of the current property;
- Prioritising
- Demand may be greater than resources available to Horizon to process requests for adaptations or to carry out installations. If prioritisation or queuing becomes necessary we shall consider, for all the cases which may be affected, the risks arising from delays, including the extent to which early provision of adaptations may prevent deterioration of each user's abilities or enable increased independence on a more sustainable basis. We may involve further OT advice to Horizon on relative priority and risks where necessary in order to enable fair decision making, We shall tell each applicant, whose request for adaptations has been assessed and agreed, when we expect to carry out the installation, and let them know as soon as possible if there are to be delays.
- Adaptations which require extensive major alterations or additions to a property may involve extended design, planning and approval periods, specific funding applications, placing tenders, and works may be carried out in stages. We shall keep the user informed and involved throughout such extended processes.
- We will advise applicants of the local authority responsibilities in respect of funding for adaptations where there is no further government funding available to Horizon.
- Funding and Procurement
- Initial costs

- We shall make annual budget provision taking into account known users' needs, trends in expenditure on adaptations, sources of grant funding and evidence of further demand.
- Where grant funding allocations from Scottish Government, Edinburgh or Glasgow City Council is exhausted in any one year, then Horizon will "front fund" in situations where the Scottish Government is able to offer sufficient comfort that the grant may be claimed in the succeeding year.
- Our budgets will normally only be available to adapt properties for rent by our tenants.
- We will provide advice to sharing owners where required about the local authority Scheme of Assistance for adaptations for home owners.
- We will provide a project management service where this is included in our service level agreement with the sharing owner, and may in other circumstances offer a project management service at cost.
- Running costs
  - Where possible, the running costs for adaptations will be met by social and health care budgets
  - Where this is not possible, repairs, maintenance and replacement costs of adaptations to rented properties will be recovered from rents and service charges
- Owners and sharing owners are responsible for all running costs.
- Grant assistance
  - We shall advise customers about installation and running costs and circumstances in which grant assistance might be available
  - We shall work with sharing owners to apply for grant funding, or assist them to apply, to meet assessed needs.
  - We shall maximise use of external funding by or for the benefit of users of adaptations.
- Procurement
  - Adaptations of Horizon's properties will be instructed in accordance with our procurement policies, procedures and financial regulations.
  - We shall employ suitably qualified and experienced tradesmen and ensure that works are adequately supervised and costs are controlled.

- We will seek to work in procurement partnerships, where appropriate, to reduce costs, e.g. servicing costs.
- Recycling of major installed equipment
- We shall retain or re-use major installed equipment, such as clos-o-mat toilets or specialist baths in rented properties at changes of tenancy / occupancy wherever possible.
- Where equipment can be reinstalled in a tenant's new home we will arrange this wherever possible.
- Where there is no further need for a major installed equipment which is in good condition, and which could be relocated and reused, we will offer this to other services providers, recovering value wherever possible.

We shall provide employees with the training and guidance needed to implement this policy. Procedures and other reference materials will be kept up to date and accessible at all times.

The Horizon Board in its formal approval of the policy acknowledges that it accepts full responsibility for its implementation. Day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this policy lies with the appropriate directors and managers. All relevant employees have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied as instructed.

## **5. MONITORING, PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING**

The following areas will be subject to monitoring:

- Numbers of properties adapted in a year
- Nature and cost of adaptations
- Waiting list, if applicable
- Speed of delivery: time from referral to completion of adaptation
- Satisfaction with the service
- Satisfaction with the completed works
- Outcomes – the difference made by the adaptation

Average delivery speed (a Charter outcome) will be reported to the Board as a KPI on a quarterly basis. The remaining indicators will be reported within the Asset Management report to the Board on an annual basis and interim policy review recommended where indicated.

If any significant issues of concern arise, these will be referred to the Operations Director who will report such matters to the Board.

Any matter which demonstrates a serious failure of internal controls should also be reported immediately to the Managing Director.

## **6. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS**

Horizon Housing welcomes complaints and positive feedback, both of which provide information which helps us to improve our services. We use a complaints handling procedure (CHP) developed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The CHP allows for most complaints to be resolved by front line staff within a five day limit (first stage), or if the complaint is complex, a detailed investigation will be made by a manager within a 20 day limit (second stage). At the end of the second stage our response will be made by a director. If the customer remains dissatisfied he/ she may then refer the matter to the SPSO.

The SPSO does not normally review complaints about our factoring service. If a factoring customer is dissatisfied after using the CHP, the complaint may be referred to the Homeowner Housing Panel.

Anyone receiving care or support service from us has the right to complain either direct to the Care Inspectorate or to us.

At each stage Horizon Housing will advise the customer how the complaint should be taken forward, and advise which agency would be most appropriate to consider the case.

## **7. POLICY AVAILABILITY**

This policy is available on request free of charge from Horizon Housing. A summary of this policy can be made available in a number of other languages and other formats on request.

## **8. POLICY REVIEW**

Horizon Housing undertakes to review this policy regularly, at least every three years, with regard to:

- Applicable legislation, rules, regulations and guidance
- Changes in the organisation
- Continued best practice