



# Rural Stirling

Housing Association

## ADAPTATIONS POLICY

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| <b>Rural Stirling Housing Association, Stirling Road, Doune, FK16 6AA.<br/>Registered as a Scottish Charity No. SC037849</b> |                                |
| <b>Policy Name</b>                                                                                                           | <b>Adaptations Policy</b>      |
| <b>Policy Category</b>                                                                                                       | Asset Management               |
| <b>Date approved by Board</b>                                                                                                | 20 <sup>th</sup> February 2020 |
| <b>Review Period</b>                                                                                                         | 3 years                        |
| <b>Review Date</b>                                                                                                           | February 2023                  |

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Rural Stirling Housing Association recognises that a number of its tenants will require adaptations to their homes in order to provide an enhanced quality of life and allow them to continue to live more comfortably in their homes for as long as possible.
- 1.2 Adapted properties help the Association to create stable, sustainable and inclusive communities. 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.
- 1.3 The Association is committed to carrying out adaptations to properties which comply with the criteria set out in this policy and with those included in the Association's other relevant policies and procedures, and guidance from the Scottish Government, Stirling Council Social Services, and The Scottish Housing Regulator. RSHA will comply with all Legislation relevant to this Policy.
- 1.4 Legislation relevant to this Policy includes: -
  - The Social work (Scotland) Act 1968
  - Chronically Sick & Disabled Person (Scotland) Act 1972
  - Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation & Representation) 1986
  - Human Rights Act 1988
  - Disability Discrimination Act 1995
  - Building Standards (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2001
  - The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
  - Disability Discrimination Act 2005
  - The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
  - The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
  - Equality Act 2010
  - The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014

## **2.0 Objectives**

- 2.1 The Association through its Adaptations Policy will aim to achieve the following when undertaking adaptations:
  - Enhance the independence, privacy and dignity of the tenant;
  - Help reduce long stays in hospital;
  - Specify the work in line with professional advice from Occupational Therapist (OT) and consultants;

- Involve the tenants and their carers' in the process and ensure their views are taken into account;
- Complete the work efficiently and competently;
- Ensure economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity in the delivery of the Adaptations service;
- Maintain communication between the tenant, Occupational Therapist, Contractor, Consultant and the Association throughout the process;
- Secure grant funding promptly, when eligible;
- Maintain a record of the work that has been undertaken;
- Maintain the adaptation;
- Secure resources for maintenance of the adaptation;
- Aim where possible, to relet the adapted property to another tenant that could benefit from the improvements. The Association will maintain a register of adapted properties detailing the type of adaptation in each property and the cost of the adaptation.

2.2 The Association aims to meet its legal obligations and The Scottish Housing Charter Outcomes No1 and No 11:-

Outcome 1 : - Equalities

*'Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect and receives fair access to housing and housing services.'*

Outcome 11 :- Tenancy Sustainment

*'Tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their homes and ensure suitable support is available including services provided directly by the Landlord and by other organisations'*

2.3 RSHA aims to be responsive to the particular needs of applicants and the changing needs of existing tenants. We will adapt our properties appropriately to meet those needs and maintain comprehensive information about the adapted properties that we own.

### **3.0 Eligibility**

3.1 Adaptations to new and existing housing owned and rented by the Association, are currently eligible for grant funding from the Scottish Government where the adaptation is deemed essential.

3.2 Sharing owners and shared equity owners may also be eligible for local authority improvement grants in the same way as other owner occupiers for adaptations to their properties. Homeowners will therefore be directed by the Association to Stirling Council for assistance.

3.3 Adaptations can be permanent or semi-permanent changes to a house and can be classified as follows: -

- Stage 1  
Features in new build developments that help create a flexible design for all accommodation types to facilitate specific needs eg wet room bathrooms.
- Stage 2  
Adaptations undertaken in a newbuild development to suit the tenant to whom it has been allocated. These usually require Scottish Government approval prior to instruction and are likely to be carried out by the Main Contractor towards the end of the contract, once the properties have been allocated.
- Stage 3  
Adaptations that are necessary to alter the property to suit the changing needs of the tenant.

#### **4.0 Referrals**

4.1 Referrals can be received from a number of different sources but most often from:

- Tenant's General Practitioner (GP);
- Health and Social Care Practitioners.
- OT's, who may be employed by a Health Board, Local Authority (LA) or other organisation such as an insurance company.

#### **5.0 Alternative Accommodation**

5.1 If the Association is unable to carry out the adaptation, consideration will be given to addressing the tenant's needs with the provision of alternative accommodation.

5.2 Accommodation may be provided:

- Within the Associations existing stock;
- By the provision of new build accommodation;
- By alternative landlords.

5.3 All options will be discussed with the tenant and supporting agencies prior to decisions being confirmed.

## **6.0 Procurement**

6.1 Adaptations will be classified as either minor or major works and will be undertaken by the Association's current Framework Contractors and/or specialist contractors when necessary.

## **7.0 Budget**

7.1 The Association submits a bid and receives an annual allocation of grant funding from the Scottish Government based on the Association's estimated requirements for the year ahead.

7.2 All adaptation works are front funded by the Association and the grant is claimed retrospectively from the Scottish Government upon completion of the works.

7.3 If our projected spend indicates that this annual budget is likely to be exceeded, the Association can request additional funding from the Scottish Government.

7.4 When the Adaptation grant funding for the financial year has been exhausted and the Association has been unable to obtain funding from any other source, we may create a waiting list of approved adaptations to take priority the following financial year. The waiting list will be processed in the order the jobs have been posted, when additional funding becomes available.

7.5 On some occasions the Association may decide to instruct the adaptation at its sole discretion and cost. Approval for the use of own resources will be sought in line with the Association's Schedule of Delegation.

## **8.0 Monitoring and Reporting**

8.1 The Association's Board will receive regular reports on Adaptations, detailing the number and type of adaptations requested and approved, the costs and how many were completed in that quarter.

8.2 The Association will monitor its performance against the following indicators which have been set by the Scottish Housing Regulator:

- The percentage of adaptations grant spent;
- Percentage of approved applications for medical adaptations completed during the reporting year;
- Average time to complete adaptations.

8.3 The Association will also monitor tenant's satisfaction and whether the adaptation

met their requirements. This will be reported to the Board.

## **9.0 Completion**

- 9.1 The Association will endeavor to carry out a post-completion inspection of all major adaptations to ensure that they have been carried out to the satisfaction of the Association and the OT.
- 9.2 Post inspections of minor adaptations may also be undertaken. All tenants will be encouraged to complete and return a satisfaction questionnaire.

## **10.0 Reallocation of adapted properties**

- 10.1 When a house has been adapted for a wheelchair user, Housing Officers should endeavor to offer the property to a person who needs wheelchair accommodation. This may require liaison with OT's, other RSL's and Stirling Council to identify suitable applicants. Circumstances for the re-allocation of an adapted property is set out in the Association's Allocation policy.
- 10.2 RSL's must demonstrate value for money in the delivery of procurement of housing adaptations and RSHA will aim to reuse or recycle adaptation equipment wherever possible. The Association may, as a last resort, consider the removal and storage of an adaptation component, if it cannot be matched to the incoming household.

## **11.0 Maintenance**

- 11.1 The Association will maintain the adaptations and, where required or where it is considered value for money, will enter into maintenance agreements with the installer or manufacturer. Maintenance costs may be recouped by variations in rental service charges assigned to the tenants.
- 11.2 Tenants of adapted properties will be provided, where necessary, with additional information for emergencies such as emergency numbers for out of hours service for specialist equipment.
- 11.3 The Association will compile information on renewal and repair timescales and costs for life cycle purposes.

## **12.0 Record Keeping**

- 12.1 All adaptations will be recorded within the computerised maintenance record. This will be updated to identify any regular maintenance work that is required on adaptations to keep them safe.

### **13.0 Sustainability**

- 13.1 This Adaptations Policy complies with RSHA's commitment to sustainability and takes account of wider economic and social impacts of the policy in terms of individuals, households, local communities and the environment.

### **14.0 Equal Opportunities**

- 14.1 This Adaptations Policy complies with RSHA's Equal opportunities Policy. RSHA recognises its proactive role in valuing and promoting diversity fairness, social justice and equality of opportunity by adopting and promoting fair policies and procedures. RSHA is committed to providing fair and equal treatment for all its stakeholders and will not discriminate on the ground of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family circumstances, employment status, physical ability and mental health.
- 14.2 This policy will be checked regularly to ensure compliance with equal opportunities taking appropriate action to address any inequalities likely to result from the implementation of the policy.

### **15.0 Data Protection & Freedom of Information**

- 15.1 Contractors, consultants and others who receive tenant data must observe the terms of Information Security as set out in the Association's Data Protection Policy and Access to Information Policy.

### **16.0 Monitoring & Review**

- 16.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years. More regular reviews will be considered when there is a need to respond to new legislation or policy guidance. Reviews will consider legislative, performance standards and good practice changes.

**RURAL STIRLING HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED**  
**ADAPTATIONS PROCEDURE**

**SECTION 1**                    **PROCEDURE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF STAGE 1 AND STAGE 2 ADAPTATIONS**

**SECTION 2**                    **PROCEDURE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF STAGE 3 ADAPTATIONS**



## **SECTION 1**

### **1.0 Procedure for the Administration of Stage 1 & 2 Adaptations**

- 1.1 The main construction costs for each project will generally be funded from AHSP grant with a balance provided through a private loan, repaid from rental income. Accordingly, the cost of Stage 1 & 2 Adaptations must always be readily identifiable as a separate cost.
- 1.2 The administration and funding of Stage 1 and Stage 2 Adaptations will normally be included within main Scheme Submissions on HARP.
- 1.3 At outline design stage, close consultation with Housing Services, specific client groups/care agencies will be required to ensure that all specific elements of design required can be included within project specifications and therefore adequately costed.
- 1.4 In terms of Stage 2 Adaptations it will be the responsibility of Housing Services to alert the Asset & Development Manager as early as possible regarding the specific needs of the tenant to whom the property requiring to be adapted has been allocated. Stage 2 Adaptations require to be estimated and shown separately from other scheme costs and qualify for 100% HAG funding.
- 1.5 If the adaptation requirement is known, at Cost Plan or Tender Stage the Association will provide an outline assessment of those items likely to be required as Stage 2 Adaptations for that particular project. Costs will be estimated will be based on previous experience from projects of a similar nature and will, in addition, take account of any known exceptional factors relative to the scheme or location in question.
- 1.6 At Tender Stage, any known Stage 2 costs should be incorporated within the tender documents in clearly identified section(s) and should be noted as "Provisional Items". In addition, a clause will be incorporated within the tender documents which will explain to the Contractor how he, in his offer, will be deemed to have made allowance for the implementation of such adaptation works.
- 1.7 During construction, the Association's Housing Services staff will be working on tenancy selection and assessment. One aim of that exercise is to determine the exact requirements of each prospective tenant including any particular need or requirement. Housing Services must convey this information to the Asset & Development Team to ensure that the understanding of the tenants' needs is reconciled within any building constraints.
- 1.8 A schedule of the agreed adaptations will be prepared and passed to the Development Agents and Lead Consultant, normally the Architect, as early as possible but in any event, no later than three months prior to the anticipated

completion date. The Lead Consultant will be required to process this information into the form of contact details, specification and variations issued under cover of Architect's or Contract Administrator's instructions. It is essential that the precise requirements are accurately interpreted and communicated throughout the above process and to facilitate this, the Association may request from the Architect, large scale plans and elevations of critical areas such as bathrooms to allow those adaptations to be precisely noted.

- 1.9 In turn, it is equally important that close attention is paid on site to the fixing locations to ensure an accurate match of the tenant's requirements and the completed provision.

## **2.0 On-Going Costings of Stage 2 Adaptations**

- 2.1 Prior to the Stage 2 Adaptations being instructed on site the Asset & Development Manager or Development Agents will seek an estimate of costs from the project's cost consultant. The details of additional costs of each Stage 2 Adaptation should be forwarded to Scottish Government indicating the Association's expectation that the costs will be 100% HAG eligible.

## **3.0 Final Cost of Stage 2 Adaptations**

- 3.1 It may be the case that the costs estimated during the contract for Stage 2 Adaptations will be different from the Final Account costs. The Asset & Development Manager or Development Agents must detail the actual costs of the Stage 2 in the final HAG Completion submission to Scottish Government to insure an increase in grant funding.

## **SECTION 2**

### **1.0 Procedure for the Administration of Stage 3 Adaptations**

1.1 This section deals with the procedures to be adopted for the administration and implementation of Stage 3 Adaptations. For administrative purposes a flow chart of actions and responsibilities has been appended to this document.

### **2.0 Planning and Co-ordination**

2.1 It will be the responsibility and function of the Asset & Development Manager to co-ordinate the planning of Stage 3 Adaptations and take measures to anticipate requirements for adaptations work.

2.2 Planning assumptions will be used by the Asset & Development Manager to estimate future adaptation budgets required each year, to inform the annual application process. Information on current stock and adapted properties will be required to provide a contextual profile of need for adaptations. The tenant profile e.g. age, gender and so on and assumptions made about this information can also be used in planning future adaptations etc.

2.3 The Technical Services Officer will principally be involved in the administration of applications and referrals for Stage 3 Adaptations and with the liaison with individual occupiers/occupational therapists, Health and Social Work Departments and other relevant agencies/authorities.

### **3.0 Annual Programme Agreement - Offer of Funding**

3.1 Every year in April the Association will be invited to make an application to Scottish Government for RSL Adaptations Funding. Once the offer of grant has been received the Association can proceed to instruct the Stage 3 works without any further approvals being required. A standard development allowance of 10% of the works costs is HAG eligible for the Association's administration costs.

### **4.0 Value Added Tax**

4.1 Whilst most Stage 3 Adaptation works are zero rated for the purposes of V.A.T., there may be some exceptions. Where this applies, the Association is required to establish the requirement to pay VAT with HM Customs and Excise. Where works are zero rated the Association and its contractors must complete an eligibility declaration form for each individual tenant receiving Adaptation.

### **5.0 Annual Grant Funding Allocation**

5.1 It will be the responsibility of the Asset & Development Manager to advise Housing and Corporate Services of Annual Grant Funding Allocations for Stage 3 Adaptations.

The Asset & Development Manager will in turn prepare funding applications and provide quarterly reports on spend to inform the Board during the course of the financial year.

- 5.2 The Asset & Development Manager will undertake to review programme against grant offered to ensure that funding underspend situations are minimized and to ensure that RSHA can take advantage of any additional funding should that become available.
- 5.3 Depending on the circumstances and the scale of the Association's reserves, the Association may decide to self-fund low cost adaptation work. Approval for this will be sought separately and will be in line with the Association's Schedule of Delegation

## **6.0 Work Specifications**

- 6.1 The Association has established standard specifications for commonly occurring Adaptations work and uses specialist contractors and consultants to deliver these. Care should be taken to ensure that a particular Adaptation is tailored to the needs of the individual and the circumstances of the property.

## **7.0 Procurement of Works**

- 7.1 All Stage 3 Adaptation works should comply with RSHA's Sustainable Procurement Policy.
- 7.2 Any adaptation estimated to cost in excess of £5,000 must be tendered by 3 contractors from the framework to comply with the Association's Procurement Policy. An exception to this will be if the works are deemed to be specialist in nature and can only be carried out by one particular contractor.
- 7.3 The Technical Services Officer will ensure that Contractors are given clear timescales to complete work. The tenant will be advised of these.
- 7.4 The Association will monitor the performance of contractors and use this information in managing its maintenance programme and completion of the ARC.
- 7.5 The Technical Services Officer will endeavor to inspect major adaptations to monitor workmanship.

## **8.0 Referrals, Acceptances and Refusals**

### **8.1 Referral Processing**

In order to determine whether the requested adaptation is essential, the Association may require an assessment to be carried out by an OT. The Association's Technical Officer may also require a site meeting to assess whether the referral request can be

accommodated within the property. The Association should acknowledge receipt of the referral within 10 working days.

8.2 Tenants approaching the Association direct will be asked to make an application to their GP for an Occupational Therapist assessment or to apply to the Social Work Offices direct.

### 8.3 Factors for Consideration

The Association will consider whether a proposed adaptation is suitable for the property in which the tenant resides by considering the following:

- How effective the proposed adaptation will be in overcoming the disadvantage experienced by the tenant;
- Whether it is physically possible and practical to implement the proposed adaptation;
- Whether there are any vacant properties that may be more suited to the tenants needs;
- The overall cost of the proposed adaptation incurred by the Association;
- The availability of resources (particularly Scottish Government Grant) that is available to undertake the proposed adaptation.

### 8.4 Refusals

The Association reserves the right to refuse to carry out an adaptation. Each case will be considered on its own merits but will be guided by the following:

- The proposed adaptation must be considered reasonable and essential;
- The adaptation must be required for a permanent member of the household;
- Proposed adaptations should meet the long-term requirements of the tenant;
- The tenant should be satisfied that the proposed adaptation will meet their needs;
- The work should offer value for money;
- The work should be capable of being completed within a reasonable period of time;
- If grant funding is not available, the Association's Finance and Corporate Services Manager should be consulted to confirm that sufficient resources are accessible to fund the works;
- The proposed adaptations should not be technically difficult to achieve and should not be undertaken to the detriment of the property, or the area or surrounding residents;
- The proposed adaptation should not contravene statutory requirements;
- A tenant must confirm their refusal in writing where they do not allow the Association to carry out an adaptation.

### 8.5 Alternative to Adaptation

In most occasions the Association will endeavor to adapt a property to allow the

tenant to remain in their own home. However, if the adaptation cannot be progressed the tenant should be encouraged to consider a transfer to another available property which may already be adapted or require minimal adaptation to suit the tenants needs. For the avoidance of doubt, the Association will in all cases consider best practice in terms of appropriateness of adaptations and their location.

#### **8.6 Consent for adaptations by tenants**

Under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, tenants with Scottish Secure tenancies or short Scottish Secure tenancies with the Association may carry out their own adaptations to their properties. Before undertaking adaptations, tenants must complete an Alteration Form and obtain the Association's written consent, which will not be unreasonably withheld.

### **9.0 Asset Management Strategy and Adaptations**

9.1 The Association must make the best use of its stock and must collate information and data on adaptations that are made to inform future allocation exercises. It can only make appropriate lets of adapted property if record keeping systems enable clear information on such property and on people seeking it to be maintained and easily retrieved. A system of recording adaptations has been introduced within the Maintenance files.

9.2 Stripping out adaptations should only be an option of last resort, after extensive efforts to relet the property has failed (e.g. after advertising to other landlords/consulting Stirling Council's OT department etc.)

### **10.0 Maintenance and Replacement of Adaptations**

10.1 At the time of carrying out an adaptation, the Association should be clear about where responsibility for maintenance and repair lies and how it is to be funded. The adaptation will be added to the Planned and Cyclical programmes of the Association and maintained as per the appropriate cycle and timescale. The adaptation will be included in the routine procedures for reporting repairs and maintenance items, with many (e.g. lifts and hoists) being in the highest category of priority.

10.2 Particular attention should be paid to whether the original providers of the equipment are willing to retain responsibility for its ongoing maintenance; if they are not, it should be clearly established how maintenance and repairs will be carried out and by whom.

10.3 Maintenance costs may be recouped by variations in rental service charges assigned to the tenants.

## **11.0 Low Cost Home Ownership**

- 11.1 Where housing is being developed for Low Cost Home Ownership/Shared Equity initiatives, works associated with Stage 1 and 2 Adaptations will be eligible for HAG on the basis that the adaptation works carried out during construction/improvement are reflected in the property valuation.
- 11.2 Stage 3 adaptations are not eligible for HAG since sharing owners are eligible for local authority grants in the same way as owner occupiers.