

FORTH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

ADAPTATIONS POLICY

Governance: Housing Management

Code: HM 11

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Cross Reference: HM 03 Allocations
M10 Repairs & Maintenance



This document can be made available in various formats such as in larger print, audio-format and Braille. It can also be made available in other languages, as appropriate.

Policy Summary

This policy has been developed to show how Forth Housing Association manage adaptation requests.

Equalities

An Equality Impact Assessment is required as tenants who are disabled will be either approved or not approved for adaptations to their home depending on the circumstances, asset management and future proofing of properties.

Privacy

There is a requirement to do a Privacy Impact Assessment as tenants will now be asked to provide information to staff in relation to their need for works. This is in cases where no Occupational Therapist is sought as per the 'Adaptations Without Delay' guidance.

Policy Owner

Name: Mareta Greig

Date of Next Review: June 2026

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 adaptations, which are classified as work being undertaken to a property to suit the changing needs of existing and prospective tenants. The purpose 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. Sharing owners/shared equity households should contact Stirling Council directly to enquire about any funding which may be available to them however we will provide advice and sign posting as required.

2 Principles

- 2.1 The following principles govern the operation of the policy:

Forth aims to apply principles in line with guidance for adaptation services:

1. Tenant centred and outcome focussed approach. By this, Forth would be led by the tenant and their families, where appropriate, not being confined by the property types and provide advice at an early stage about options.
2. Fair and Consistent application: Clear understanding on the policy and procedure with a view to prioritisation of potential works.
3. Promote Inclusion and Independent living: Encouraging tenants to carry out self-assessment which would enable simple adaptations to be carried out in a timely manner.

3 Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 The aim of this policy is to provide accessible homes for rent within the Stirling area whilst providing an adaptation service which provides home alterations to meet the needs of existing (or prospective) tenants to enable them to remain in a home of their own and/or maintain their independence for longer and improve the quality of life.

4 Policy Framework

- 4.1 The 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.

- 4.2 **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. Where funding of temporary adaptations does not come from Stirling Council, we will fund this work.
- 4.3 **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. Forth is also responsible for the maintenance of permanent adaptations.
- 4.4 **Simple adaptations** are defined as a change that does not affect the overall structure of the dwelling e.g. handrails, lever handles, over bath showers or level access showers.
- 4.5 **Complex adaptations** are defined as permanent structural changes to the dwelling e.g. widening doors, installation of a through lift, and extensions added to the property. They may also include a number of adaptations to suit complex needs.
- 4.6 Appendix 1 gives examples of temporary and permanent adaptations.

Funding Arrangements

- 4.7 A bid for funding for 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.
- 4.8 Once funding is approved, Forth will carry out 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.
- 4.9 If additional funding is not available from the Scottish Government, Forth may prioritise adaptations or hold adaptations until funding is available. Forth may also consider making funds available as 'front funding' until the next tranche of grant funding is available.

Referral Process

- 4.10 The adaptation process begins with the needs of our tenant or household member being identified. Forth has adopted the 'Adaptations without Delay' guidance which has been created by the Royal College of Occupational Therapists. Simple adaptations, detailed in the simple adaptations procedure, can be instructed by the RSL (Housing Association) staff member. More

complex adaptations such as extensions to the property, track hoist and mechanical baths will still require an Occupational Therapist (OT) to provide a referral and input to the scope of works.

- 4.11 The initial enquiry can be made directly by the tenant as a self-referral, a carer or relative, a GP/NHS staff, OT or by another agency acting on the tenant's behalf or by Forth HA staff.
- 4.12 Tenants may directly contact a Stirling Council OT or will be advised by a member of Forth's Housing Services staff how best to do so.
- 4.13 A Housing Officer will arrange to visit a tenant's home and complete a self-assessment form detailing the needs of the tenant/household member and their situation. The self-assessment form will provide an understanding of the areas where the tenant requires assistance and the scope of the adaptation works which would benefit the living arrangements. Where a permanent adaptation such as curved stair lift or mechanical bath is required, the OT will be required to carry out an assessment, with a referral form sent to Forth's Housing Services staff to advise the type of adaptation required and the priority attached to the request.
- 4.14 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.

- 4.15 Requests for other adaptations, which do not achieve the above levels of priority, will be considered within budget constraints.

Decisions

- 4.16 Upon receipt of a request or referral, Forth's staff shall work with the tenant (and their family or other parties) to consider the request and if required, liaise with an OT to obtain sufficient clarification to allow an appropriate decision to be made. Where an adaptation is requested for member of the household who does not reside in the property full time (e.g. visiting children), the same decision making process will apply.
- 4.17 In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Forth will take reasonable steps to ensure that our properties are adapted to suit the needs of tenants that require adaptations to assist with continued independent living. For simple adaptations

staff will make a decision following a home visit to meet the tenant and assess the work required.

- 4.18 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. Forth shall take a view on the installation of such showers during the course of our planned maintenance programmes to avoid any delays.
- 4.19 However, where more complex adaptations are needed, 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.
- 4.20 An option appraisal must always take place where the OTs assessment indicates that the adaptation is complex 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).
- 4.21 Forth will make a decision on carrying out an adaptation within 10 days of the receipt of the request.
- 4.22 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.
- 4.23 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 front fund the work and undertake the adaptation.

Allocations

- 4.24 The allocation of homes is covered by Forth's Allocations Policy.
- 4.25 Where properties have been built and/or permanently adapted to meet the specialist needs of a 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.
- 4.26 Any re-let allocation, where there is no requirement, 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.

New Build Developments

Forth has committed to further new build development in the coming years. When planning these developments, staff will work with partners to consider the accessibility needs of tenants in order to provide homes which are adapted from the outset.

Stage 2 Grant funding may apply to adapt new build properties to suit the new tenants needs.

Planned Maintenance

Our planned maintenance programme will support tenants/service users and enhance their mobility, safety and independence by identifying and assessing housing stock already adapted and those capable of benefiting from accessibility improvements. By enhancing the accessibility of the property, for example through the installation of an accessible bathroom, this approach therefore also seeks to improve the overall accessibility of the existing housing stock.

5 Monitoring of the Policy

- 5.1 The Management Committee will review this policy at least every 3 years and staff are responsible for ensuring that it meets legal and good practice requirements.

6.0 Complaints and Appeals

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

The complaints procedure 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.

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

7.0 Equalities

- 7.1 Equality and diversity underpin all our activities and services. When delivering our services, we never discriminate on the basis of sex or marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language, social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political

opinions. Full details of our Equalities Policy can be found on our website www.forthha.org.uk or can be obtained from our office.

8.0 Data Protection - Privacy

8.1 We recognise the importance of data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation, in protecting the rights of individuals in relation to personal information that we may handle, use and disclose about them, whether on computer or in paper format. We will ensure that our practices in the handling, use and disclosure of personal information as part of the processes and procedures outlined in this policy comply fully with data protection legislation. More information is available from our Data Protection Officer

9.0 Availability

9.1 This policy is available on our website and can be made available in a number of other languages and other formats on request.

10.0 Review

10.1 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

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

Temporary adaptations

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

Appendix 1 Equality Impact Assessment Screening Questions

Forth Housing Association Ltd Equality Impact Assessment Screening Questions

Adaptations

Will the implementation of this policy have an impact on any of the following protected characteristics?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Age | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Disability | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Gender reassignment | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Marriage and Civil Partnership | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Pregnancy and Maternity | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Race | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Religion or belief | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Sex | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Sexual orientation | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

If you have answered 'Yes' to any of these points, please complete a full Equality Impact Assessment. If you have answered 'No', you need take no further action in completing an Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 2 Equality Impact Assessment Screening Questions

Forth Housing Association - Privacy Impact Assessment

1. A substantial change to an existing policy, process or system that involves personal information
Yes No
2. A new collection of personal information
Yes No
- 3.. A new way of collecting personal information (for example collecting it online)
Yes No
4. A change in the way personal information is stored or secured
Yes No
5. A change to how sensitive information is managed
Yes No
6. Transferring personal information outside the EEA or using a third-party contractor
Yes No
7. A decision to keep personal information for longer than you have previously
Yes No
8. A new use or disclosure of personal information you already hold
Yes No
9. A change of policy that results in people having less access to information you hold about them
Yes No
10. Surveillance, tracking or monitoring of movements, behaviour or communications
Yes No
11. Changes to your premises involving private spaces where clients or customers may disclose their personal information (reception areas, for example)
Yes No

If you have answered 'Yes' to any of these points, please complete a full Privacy Impact Assessment. If you have answered 'No', you need take no further action in completing a Privacy Impact Assessment.

