

Equipment, Aids and Adaptations Policy

2014 -17

Policy Owner	Policy Manager
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Directorate: Housing and Customer Services

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River Clyde Homes' Vision

Our vision is to provide quality, affordable homes, in neighbourhoods we can be proud of and to deliver excellent services that make a real difference for our customers.

River Clyde Homes' Values: CARES

- Customer first, performance driven
- Acting with integrity, being professional
- Respect for each other, our partners
- Embrace innovation, challenge expectations
- Spend our money wisely

River Clyde Homes' Objectives

- Excellent customer experience
- Sustainable homes and places
- Improved energy efficiency
- Safer and better customers
- An efficient company
- A growing company
- Diverse, committed and empowered workforce

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This document will be reviewed in April 2017

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1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to ensure River Clyde Homes is responsive to the particular needs of applicants for our homes and the changing needs of our existing customers. It sets out River Clyde Homes' approach to supporting tenants and household members to maintain and improve their quality of life through the provision of specific equipment, aids and adaptations.

The policy will provide a person-centred approach to assist in sustaining tenants in their own home where it is feasible to do so and should be recognised as an important part of our asset management.

As the general population grows older and life expectancy increases we can expect an increase in the demand for equipment, aids and adaptations within our stock and an increasing need to be responsive and proactive in meeting changing customer needs.

This policy applies to tenants and family members living in River Clyde Homes' properties requiring equipment, aids and adaptations to enhance their quality of life and remain within their existing home.

The policy may also apply to particular types of property, e.g. frail and mobility impaired, sheltered or extra care housing stock where a holistic approach to adaptations could be undertaken.

2 Policy Statement

Policy Objectives:

The key objectives of the Equipment, Aids and Adaptations Policy are to:

- widen the extent of available property for reduced mobility customers;
- incorporate adaptations into routine maintenance and investment works wherever possible;
- provide a person-centred approach by ensuring that customers and their family/carers are involved in decisions about adaptations and housing options and take their views into account;
- ensure an inclusive approach to the planning and delivery of adaptation services working with partner agencies such as the Inverclyde Centre for Independent Living;
- benefit customers who have support from family or their advocates to remain in their community, which will increase tenancy sustainment in communities and reduced turnover of properties.

- reducing extended hospital stays for existing and new customers;
- promote good practice and comply with legal and statutory requirements in relation to the provision of disabled adaptations and report performance to the regulator.

Funding:

While the statutory duty to provide adaptations lies with the council to meet eligible assessed needs, Housing Association Grant supports Registered Social Landlords to adapt properties for individual needs. This may be supplemented with a capital contribution by River Clyde Homes.

Currently 25% of our housing stock is adapted and increasing this percentage will demonstrate that River Clyde Homes is taking account of an ageing and diverse population in Inverclyde, as well as the specific needs of our customer profile.

River Clyde Homes will therefore commit to making funding available to support applications for equipment, aids and adaptations over the period 2014-17.

Policy Approach:

River Clyde Homes will encourage its customers, their family members or advocates, to seek the advice and guidance of our staff in the first instance.

River Clyde Homes will seek to determine the type of adaptation being requested and this may be dealt with directly by the company without referral to the CIL for further advice or assessment. The following is a guide to the likely response of River Clyde Homes to requests for equipment, aids and adaptations:

a) Minor Adaptations

River Clyde Homes will seek to directly provide minor adaptations and meet requests for equipment where the cost is £1,000 or less and without referral to the CIL for assessment;

b) Major Adaptations

Requests for major adaptations will require assessment by the CIL. The expertise provided by the CIL will determine the extent, design and appropriateness of major adaptations. These may require funding from sources other than River Clyde Homes;

c) Major Adaptations greater than £10,000 and rehousing

Where the CIL determine the need for adaptations in excess of £10,000, **or where the existing home is not suitable for a major adaptation**, River Clyde Homes will discuss alternative housing options with the customer, their family or advocate, and the CIL, to determine whether a move of home to a more suitable

property would be to the advantage of the customer and a more financially viable solution.

Further details on minor and major aids and adaptations are set out in **Appendix 1**.

3 Supporting Procedures

Equipment, Aids and Adaptations procedure and 'knowledge map'.

4 Status

Reviewed in accordance with the policy review timetable; this policy takes into account customer and partner feedback.

5 Key Stakeholders

- A tenant who is frail or mobility impaired;
- The partner of a tenant who is frail or mobility impaired;
- A member of the tenant's immediate family who is frail or mobility impaired and is permanently resident in the household.
- Inverclyde Council and the Community Health and Care Partnership;
- Inverclyde Centre for Independent Living (CIL);
- Scottish Government;
- Referrals may come from the Occupational Therapist via the NHS, CIL, community nurses or home carers.

6 Statutory Framework and Context

The statutory framework which underpins equipment, aids and adaptations is:

The Equalities Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005

Place a responsibility on landlords to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminate discrimination which is unlawful under disability legislation;
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people related to their disability;
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encourage participation of disabled people in public life;
- Take steps to meet disabled people's needs.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

This covers discrimination in relation to the letting of premises. It requires a landlord to 'take reasonable steps to change policies, practices and procedures which would

make it difficult for a disabled person to take a let or enjoy the benefits or facilities conferred with the lease’.

It also requires social landlords to identify the specific needs for their services from people with impairments, to assess the extent to which their services meet those needs and to set out how any gaps in provision will be filled.

Scottish Social Housing Charter

The policy meets four of the Scottish Social Housing Charter’s outcomes to assess the performance of registered social landlords as follows;

Outcome 1: Equalities

Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:

“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.”

This outcome describes what social landlords, by complying with equalities legislation, should achieve for all tenants and other customers regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. It includes landlords’ responsibility for finding ways of understanding the needs of different customers and delivering services that recognise and meet these needs.

Outcome 2: Communication

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

“Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.”

Outcomes 7: Housing Options

Social landlords work together to ensure that:

“People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them.”

Outcome 11: Tenancy sustainment

Social landlords ensure that:

“Tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.”

The Policy also contributes to positive outcomes for River Clyde Homes' **Business Plan Outcomes**, namely:

BPO1 - An excellent Customer Experience;
BPO2 - Sustainable Homes and Places;
BPO4 - Safer and Better Supported Customers;
BPO5 - An Efficient Company.

7 Related Performance Indicators

- % of applications for adaptations approved;
- Time taken from approval of adaptation to works completion;
- Average days from customer contact with River Clyde Homes or referral from Centre for Independent Living to assessment for an adaptation;
- Average days from assessment to commencing works
- Average days between first customer contact and completion of adaptation;
- Satisfaction with process to request an adaptation;
- Satisfaction with adaptation undertaken;
- Overall customer satisfaction with the Equipment, Aids and Adaptations process.

8 Related Policies

River Clyde Homes aims to comply with legislation, guidance and good practice. Account has also been taken of key national and local strategies and policies including:

- All our futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Aging Population, Scottish Government (2007)
- Community Care Outcomes Framework, NHS, 2009
- National Carers Strategy, Scottish Government, 2010/15
- Reshaping Care for Older People: Inverclyde Council and NHS, April 2013
- Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy, 2011/16
- Inverclyde Carers Strategy, 2012/15

Reference has also been made to related River Clyde Homes strategies and policies including:

- Tenancy Sustainment Strategy;
- Equality and Diversity Strategy;
- Sustainable Homes and Places Strategy;
- 'Your Home' Allocations Policy;
- Repairs Policies;
- Vulnerable Customers Policy

9 Date Effective

From April 2014

10 Review Date

No later than April 2017

11 Policy Owner

The Director of Housing and Customer Services is accountable for the implementation of this policy. The Director will be supported in this by the following officers:

- Head of Customer Excellence;
- Extra Care Manager;
- Extra Care team and staff.

Appendix 1

Definitions of Adaptations

a) Minor Adaptations and Equipment less than £1,000

- grab rails (internal and external)
- handrails
- lever taps
- stair rails
- intercom systems
- electric sockets
- flashing beacons
- over bath shower
- fixed floor toilet frame

b) Major Adaptations

- wet room showers
- walk in showers
- stair lifts
- ramps
- wider doors or paths
- sliding doors
- kitchen adaptations
- internal wheelchair access
- step alterations
- hoists

c) Major Adaptations greater than £10,000

- extensions
- major alterations such as a combination of major adaptations
- installation of ground floor toilet and or shower
- through floor lifts
- external alterations e.g. paving areas, creating level access