Adaptations Policy

Document Control

Responsible Person	Operations Director			
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Reviewed by	Board			
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Consultation Required	Yes	✓	No	
Equalities Impact Assessment	Yes	✓	No	
Added to Company Website	Yes	✓	No	
Associated Documents Considered	Yes	✓	No	

1. Scope of the Policy

1.1. Adaptation is not just about equipment or modifications. It is about people. People are paramount in the adaptation process, because the purpose of any adaptation is to restore independence, confidence and dignity to individuals who become restricted in their environment due to disability.

1.2. Stage 3 adaptations refers to works to adapt a property to suit the changing needs of the existing tenant, or of a new tenant, where these could not be reasonably identified when the house was originally provided. Normally the type of works carried out as Stage 3 adaptations includes provision of level access showers, ramps, widening of doorways.

2. Objectives of the Policy

2.1. Waverley Housing realises that from time to time some of its tenants may face difficulty in their living conditions for reasons of disability, age, frailty or infirmity. The Company is willing to look at practical ways, where possible, for tenants to stay in their own homes under such circumstances by considering adaptation of their property. This objective ties in with our Tenancy Sustainment Strategy which seeks to support tenants to maintain their tenancies.

2.2. It may however be necessary from time to time in order to make best use of available resources and adapted properties to consider the transfer of a tenant to a house more suited to their needs.

2.3. The Company will make annual application to the Scottish Government for grant funding of stage 3 adaptations, through Eildon Housing Association who will co-ordinate the collation of applications on behalf of the four Registered Social Landlords based in the Scottish Borders.

2.4. Applications for adaptation will only be accepted on the basis that reasonable consideration of temporary aids and equipment will always be the first choice where it is appropriate to do so. Temporary aids and equipment will be provided by the Company, Social Work or the Health Board depending on the circumstances of the case.

2.5. Applications submitted will be in accordance with Social Work Criteria and the criteria set out in this policy and must be made through an Occupational Therapist from Scottish Borders Council Social Work Services or from NHS Borders, normally after referral from the tenant's GP or other Health Professional.

2.6. Waverley Housing will only accept applications for major adaptations on the understanding that the case has been discussed under the normal supervision process within the Social Work Department and NHS Borders. Major adaptations refer to items such as provision of level access showers, stair lifts, ramps, hoists or kitchen alterations. The Company will maintain such adaptations once installed and ensure any required servicing arrangements e.g. annual check of stair lifts are carried out.

2.7. Adaptations will only be considered where the applicant can reasonably be expected to enjoy increased independence and an improved quality of life, for a reasonably significant period following the work. Tenants benefiting from the provision of adaptations will be able to feedback their views via our satisfaction survey forms and information obtained from these surveys will be used to improve our performance where appropriate.

2.8. All adaptation requests will be processed in accordance with the Stage 3 Adaptations Contract between Waverley Housing and Eildon Housing Association Limited, appointed as Managing Agents for this purpose.

2.9. Where funding is exhausted in any given financial year, adaptations which have been agreed but not yet carried out will be put on a waiting list until the next annual funding grant is available. Adaptations on the waiting list will be prioritised in accordance with 2.8 above.

2.10. Adaptations to properties may be refused where Waverley Housing considers that they are technically impractical, or that the property is unsuitable for adaptation or for the needs of the applicant, or where the cost of the works is excessive.

2.11. Waverley Housing will take account of whether the needs of the applicant can be better met by other solutions i.e. re-housing, physical aids or equipment etc.

2.12. In order to best utilise adapted properties Waverley Housing may recommend re-housing where this might be considered as a reasonable and practical alternative to other possible solutions. In the case of re-housing assistance may be given with relocation expenses according to individual circumstances and where so given will be at the sole discretion of Waverley Housing.

2.13. All applicants for housing are required to give information on any medical needs they may have. Applicants with medical needs are asked if they require a suitable property with adaptations fitted that will meet their needs. Houses that have not been adapted will not be allocated to such applicants on the presumption that an adaptation approval may be given in the future.

2.14. Applications for adaptation will not be considered within the first year of any new tenancy where the housing applicant or member of their household has not declared any special needs or adaptation requirements unless there has been a significant change in the household's circumstances which would warrant the need for an adaptation. In such cases the adaptation would only be agreed following a case conference with the Social Work Department.

2.15. All Stage 3 adaptations will be recorded in the attributes of the relevant property within the Asset Management System.

2.16. Tenants may wish to consider paying for the adaptation themselves and depending on the adaptation they may be entitled to receive compensation for the adaptation when they leave the property. Our Tenants Right to Compensation Policy provides further details in this connection. Tenants pursuing this option need to submit a written request to the Company to receive approval before commencing any adaptation works.

2.17. Following implementation of the various provisions contained in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 there is now an enhanced right to recover possession of properties designed or adapted for special needs. This will allow the Company to recover a property which has significantly benefited from the provision of adaptations and where the current tenant or occupier does not need these adaptations. In seeking recovery of such a property the tenant must be provided with suitable alternative accommodation.

3. Implementation of the Policy

3.1. Waverley Housing will ensure that the relevant employees have the appropriate level of skills and knowledge to deliver the requirements of this policy.

4. Complaints

4.1. Tenants who feel that Waverley Housing have not delivered the service outlined in this policy have the right to complain. Complaints will be dealt with in accordance with Waverley Housing's Complaints Policy, a copy of which can be obtained on request. Tenants also have the right to refer the matter to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman upon exhaustion of the complaints process.

5. Review process

5.1. This Policy has been approved by the Board of Waverley Housing and will be subject to regular review by the Board in accordance with Waverley Housing's policy review procedures.