

# ADAPTATIONS FOR TENANTS OF STOCKPORT HOMES POLICY

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Stockport Homes Group (SHG) is committed to ensuring that tenants and other occupants at a property who experience health problems and/or have disabilities can continue to live safely and independently within their own homes.

1.2 In order to meet this commitment, SHG will provide adaptations in line with the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended).

1.3 SHG will also ensure that the resources available are focused on meeting need in the most efficient and effective way.

1.4 This policy sets out the circumstances in which an adaptation is permitted and how applications are assessed.

## 2 STRATEGIC LINKS

2.1 This policy links to the following:

- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended).
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- Equality Act 2010.
- Care Act 2014.
- Stockport Council Major Adaptations Policy.
- Stockport Council Allocations Policy.
- SHG's mission of One team, transforming lives.  
SHG's ASPIRE values of 'ambition'..... to create brilliant outcomes for our customers, and 'social responsibility'..... to build our communities and empower our people.

## 3 KEY FEATURES OF THE POLICY

3.1 SHG will provide a range of minor and major adaptations to assist tenants to remain safe and comfortable and maintain their independence within their own homes.

3.2 Adaptations for occupants other than the tenant will generally only be considered if that person has resided with the tenant throughout the previous 12 months and this must be their only or main residence (evidence of this may be required).

3.3 Evidence of such residency throughout the 12-month period may be required as a precursor to any adaptations being carried out. This could include, but not limited to bank statements, correspondence from government departments.

3.4 SHG will ensure that, where practicable, available adapted properties are allocated to those that in most need.

## **EQUIPMENT**

3.5 Equipment can be provided by Stockport Council or Adult Social Care that:

- Can be portable or temporary
- Provide assistance to those who have difficulties with daily living activities, such as getting in/out of a bath, up from a low toilet, carrying things between rooms.

## **MINOR ADAPTATION**

3.6 A minor adaptation is one:

- Costing less than £500
- Installed to maintain the independence of the tenant, for example stair rail, lever taps.

## **MAJOR ADAPTATION**

3.7 A major adaptation is one:

- Where the cost exceeds £500.<sup>1</sup>
- That provides assistance to a tenant to live as independently as possible, for example bathroom adaptations, stair lifts, property access such as ramps, door widening.

3.8 SHG will assist those in need of major adaptations to make informed choices about their housing options, facilitating transfers to more appropriate accommodation where required.

## **DFG GRANTS**

3.9 Tenants are eligible to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) to fund a major adaptation.

3.10 However, funds are provided within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for major adaptations to Council properties.

## **EXCLUSIONS**

3.11 Exclusions for major adaptations apply in the following circumstances:

- The property is not managed by SHG.
- The tenant is already seeking to move or transfer to more suitable accommodation.

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<sup>1</sup> Stockport Council Major Adaptations Policy 2011

- A Right to Buy application has been submitted. In these circumstances requests for equipment and / or advice and support will be referred to Adult Social Care (ASC).
- The requirements of the Property Test are not met (see section five below).
- Where the adaptation is costly but necessary, alternative accommodation may be offered. Such cases will be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure that value for money is achieved

3.12 A Property Test must be applied in line with the 1996 Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act (as per section four below).

### **REHOUSING OPTIONS**

3.13 SHG aims to make the best use of its housing stock and ensure most cost-effective use of the stock. Therefore, rehousing will be discussed with the tenant in all cases requiring a major adaptation and arrangements made for the tenant to move to alternate more suitable accommodation if that is their wish.

3.14 Where properties are unsuitable for major adaptations and/or where only extensive, costly adaptations (defined as in excess of £30,000) will meet the particular needs of the household, rehousing will be the decision in the first instance even where the tenant may express a preference not to move.

### **WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE PROPERTIES**

3.15 Properties which are wheelchair accessible will be allocated via an Adapted Property Panel attended by representatives from SHG and ASC.

3.16 There is no standard definition of a wheelchair accessible property, however for the avoidance of doubt SHG classifies such as any property with level or ramped access plus one or more major adaptation.

### **PROPERTY TEST**

3.17 The property test in the 1996 Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act states that:

- It must be reasonable and practicable to carry out the relevant work, having regard to the age and condition of the building
- If the property is unfit, the (local housing) authority must decide if it is reasonable and practical to carry out the work.

3.18 In addition and having regard to any concerns about current and future mobility, tenants who reside above ground floor level with no lift access will not be eligible for any major adaptations that are designed to meet physical disability limitations (for example a level access shower), unless there is direct private access to their home from ground level and all other property tests can be met. In such cases, tenants should be supported to explore alternative housing options.

3.19 All rooms are to be considered as being suitable for adaptation, for example using a dining room as a bedroom. The only exception to this will be the principal living room (although large 'through' living rooms may be split), the main family bathroom and the kitchen. In these three rooms, adaptations may be carried out, but the essential purpose of the room will remain unchanged.

## **4 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

4.1 The policy ensures SHG adapt properties which allow customers to live independently and with less reliance on social care and health services.

## **5 OWNERSHIP MONITORING AND REVIEW**

5.1 The Policy is owned by the Operations Directorate and will be monitored by the Operations Management Team.

5.2 The Policy will be reviewed in line with the Operations Management Policy and Procedure Review Schedule.