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Council**

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Clackmannanshire Council
Housing Service
Property Adaptations Policy
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1. Scope of the Policy

Clackmannanshire Council recognises the essential role that property adaptations play in supporting tenants and their household members to live safely, comfortably, and independently in their homes. This policy sets out the framework through which the Council's Housing Service will assess, prioritise, and deliver property adaptations for households living in Council tenancies. It applies to individuals with long-term illnesses or disabilities, as well as households living under formal kinship care arrangements.

In responding to adaptation requests, the Housing Service will explore all viable options to meet the long-term needs of the tenants and the wider household and ensure effective allocation and management of the Service's resources. The Service recognises that not all adaptation requests will be appropriate or suitable. In such circumstances, the Service will explore alternative housing solutions to meet the needs of the household, including, but not limited to, rehousing to a more suitable property.

The Housing Service will aim to work with Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) to establish joint governance arrangements and ensure that responsibilities and budgets for delivering property adaptations are appropriately delegated to the Integration Joint Board, in line with legislative requirements and the Health and Social Care Integration Scheme.

The Policy supports the aims of Clackmannanshire Council's Keeping the Promise Plan, Clackmannanshire Council's Allocations Policy and should be read in conjunction with Clackmannanshire's Scottish Secure and Short Scottish Secure Tenancy agreements.

2. Aims of the Policy

The policy aims to ensure that Clackmannanshire Council tenants and their families are supported to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible. The specific aims of the policy are to provide a framework to help:

- Enable and promote a direct access pathway for simple, non-complex adaptation requests;
- Ensure effective partnership working with the HSCP and service delivery through appropriate delegation of adaptation functions to the Integration Joint Board;
- Improve tenants' overall wellbeing and quality of life;
- Improve Council's housing stock by adapting suitable properties for future lets;
- Manage the Council's housing stock efficiently, by avoiding adapting properties that are unsuitable for long-term needs and ensuring that adapted properties are allocated to those who will benefit from them the most;
- Prioritise needs effectively and ensure the efficient use of Council resources;
- Provide tenants with clear information, advice, and support in relation to their medical or mobility-related needs;
- Support tenants in making informed decisions about their housing options, including rehousing where appropriate.



3. Legislative Framework

Clackmannanshire Council will ensure that this policy adheres to all legislative requirements under relevant legislation and complies with statutory guidance. The rules and regulations governing the local authorities' duties in meeting the needs of Council tenants and carrying out property adaptations can be found in the following legislation:

- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- Equality Act 2010
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014
- Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968

4. Types of adaptations

Clackmannanshire Council categorises adaptations as minor or major.

Minor adaptations are simple modifications to the property to improve safety and accessibility. Examples include:

- Grab rails and hand grips;
- Additional stair rails; or
- Bannisters.

Major adaptations involve more extensive work or structural changes to the property, including but not limited to:

- Level-access showers or wet rooms;
- Door widening;
- External ramps;
- Kitchen adaptations;
- Property alterations such as garage or loft conversions;
- Property extensions;
- Stairlifts; or
- Through-floor lifts.

5. Eligibility Criteria

The Housing Service will consider a request for adaptation within a Council-owned property where the tenant and/or any members of their household:



- Is a permanent resident within the household;
- Has a disability which has a significant long-term impact on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities in and around their home; or
- Lives under formal kinship care arrangement and requires property adaptations to meet the needs of the household.

Adaptations for children of parents/guardians with shared access arrangement will usually only be carried out at the property that is the child's main and principal home.

For the purposes of this policy, a person is considered to be disabled if they have a physical, sensory, or mental impairment with a substantial and lasting effect (12 months or more) on their ability to carry out normal daily activities.

6. Making an Enquiry

Before seeking adaptations, tenants are encouraged to use [AskSARA](#), an online self-help tool that provides impartial advice and helps identify whether their needs can be met through equipment. This can support tenants in making informed decisions and may reduce the need for formal adaptations.

6.1. Minor adaptations

If the tenant requires minor adaptations, they can self-refer themselves by contacting Housing Repairs Team and filling out an application form. Clackmannanshire Council will then organise the necessary works.

6.2. Major Adaptations

The Housing Service offers direct access pathways to tenants with disabilities for simple, non-complex adaptations without the need for an initial assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT). Tenants making a self-referral will be asked to complete a self-assessment form, which outlines their needs and current living arrangements, and helps to inform the level of support and the scope of adaptation works required.

Once the tenant completes the form, the Housing Service will assess the form and determine whether to proceed with the application or whether there is a need for further OT input and/or assessment.

Each case will be considered on its own merit. Where the request is deemed to be complex due to the individual circumstances of the tenant the tenant will be referred for a further OT assessment, before the adaptation request can be progressed.

Requests relating to kinship carer households will require a Social Work assessment to confirm that the kinship care arrangement will be formalised.



7. Assessment of Suitability

Following the referral or on the receipt of the self-assessment form for major adaptations, the Housing Service will carry out a physical assessment of the suitability of the property to determine the practical feasibility of the adaptation.

Suitability of the property will be based on:

- Type of adaptation required;
- The existence of other adaptations within the property;
- Property layout, including property type and size;
- Environmental assessment where building/planning permissions are required;
- Structural feasibility of the proposed adaptation.

If the property is deemed not to be suitable for the proposed work or if the household's needs cannot be reasonably met within the property, the tenant may be recommended to move to a more suitable property. For further information on refusals and relocation please see sections 11 and 12.

Wherever possible, adaptations will be designed to fit within the existing footprint of the property. Requests for property extensions will not normally be considered and will only proceed in exceptional circumstances where there is clear, evidenced justification. In some cases, alternative solutions such as garage or loft conversions may be considered where appropriate as an alternative to an extension.

Where an adaptation request involves a property extension or conversion, the Housing Service will review compliance with all relevant statutory planning and building standards. This may require consultation with the Council's Planning Department before any decision is made.

Where an adaptation request involves a property extension or conversion, the Housing Service will review the proposal to ensure compliance with all relevant planning and building standards legislation. The Service require to consult with the Council's Planning Department before a decision can be made to approve the request

8. Prioritisation of Adaptations

Each year, the Housing Service allocates a dedicated budget for adaptations to Council-owned properties. While the Service aims to support all households requesting adaptations, the availability of funding for adaptations is limited and reviewed annually. As a result, requests for major adaptations are prioritised based on the assessed level of need.

The severity of need is determined by a range of factors, including, but not limited to, existing medical conditions, the extent of mobility limitations, access to essential facilities within the home, and the impact of the tenant's condition on other household members.

Requests will be categorised as follows:



1. Severe Need
2. Moderate Need
3. Routine Need
4. Adaptation Unsuitable.

Category of Need	Indicator*
Severe Need	<p>The person's condition is expected to deteriorate rapidly without intervention and the adaptation is required to maintain independence.</p> <p>Multiple health issues are present (e.g., skin integrity concerns, incontinence), and the adaptation is required to safely access essential personal care facilities.</p> <p>The individual is currently in hospital and unable to be discharged due to the lack of adaptations required at home to ensure their safety and ability to mobilise within the property and maintain self-care.</p>
Moderate Need	<p>There is a clear and ongoing need for adaptation to access essential facilities, and the person is currently using alternative, less suitable methods (e.g., washing at a sink due to inaccessible bathing facilities), but there are no immediate risks of deterioration of the condition.</p> <p>The individual has been recently discharged from hospital and is managing at home, but with difficulty. Adaptation would significantly improve safety, quality of life and ability to carry out personal care.</p>
Routine Need	<p>A need for adaptation has been identified, but current circumstances reduce the urgency or risk, such as another able-bodied adult within the household available to assist with daily tasks.</p> <p>The person can access all areas of the property, and while adaptation would be beneficial, it is not essential for daily functioning.</p>
Adaptation Unsuitable	<p>A need for adaptation has been identified, but it would not enable the person to access the facilities or improve their situation.</p> <p>The adaptation would not result in a meaningful benefit or improved independence.</p> <p>Clinical and/or safety factors make the adaptation request unsuitable, such as where the person's cognitive impairment poses significant risk in operating powered equipment. In such cases, provision should be guided by a risk and capacity assessment, where alternative solutions might be considered.</p>



*Please note that the examples provided within each category of need are illustrative and indicative of the need, and are not exhaustive.

Severe need cases will be considered first, followed by moderate need and routine need cases respectively.

Where the adaptation is deemed to be the unsuitable solution, the adaptation will not be carried out, and the tenant will be given appropriate advice.

The waiting list will be reviewed on a 6-month basis to identify any changes in individual needs.

9. Decision Making

Upon receiving a request or referral for major adaptations, the Housing Service will engage with the tenant and liaise with relevant stakeholder services to support an informed and appropriate decision to be made. The Service is committed to taking all reasonable steps to adapt Council properties to meet the needs of tenants requiring adaptations.

Each request will be assessed on its individual merits. The Service will determine the most appropriate course of action to meet the long-term needs of the individual, considering factors such as:

- The condition and overall suitability of the current property;
- The availability of suitable alternative accommodation;
- The cost-benefit analysis of the proposed adaptation and any alternative options;
- The impact of the adaptation on other household members.

Where an adaptation is likely to be required in the future or has been requested by the tenant (e.g., bathroom or kitchen modification), and the property is scheduled for works under the Council's Capital Improvement Programme, the Housing Service will aim to deliver the adaptation as part of those works. This will only apply if the request aligns with the scope of the programme.

In cases where there is no immediate need for the adaptation, but a future requirement has been identified, this will be noted and considered when Capital Improvement works are due to take place in the area.

10. Complex Cases

The Service recognises that certain property adaptation requests may be considered complex. Complex adaptations typically involve structural changes or permanent modifications to the property, and may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Property extensions or alterations such as garage or loft conversions;
- Requests that require multiple adaptations;
- Prohibitively expensive adaptations;



- Cases that present complex social, personal or financial circumstances.

Each case will be assessed individually to determine its complexity. All adaptation requests involving households living under formal kinship care arrangements will automatically be deemed as complex. These cases will require input from relevant partner stakeholders to identify and recommend appropriate solutions.

Where an adaptation is deemed complex, the Housing Service will aim to hold a Complex Case Panel together with the relevant partner stakeholders. The purpose of the Panel would be to review all available information and evidence, conduct an options appraisal and make a recommendation to support final decision-making by the Housing Service.

During the case conference, the Panel will consider all available housing options, evaluate the urgency of the need in comparison to other households requesting adaptations, assess the suitability of the proposed adaptations and determine whether the proposal aligns with budgetary constraints and Service priorities.

11. Refusals

In certain circumstances, applications for major adaptations may be refused. This includes, but is not limited to, the following circumstances:

- The adaptation will not meet the tenant's long-term housing needs, and a reasonable alternative solution can be offered, such as an offer of alternative suitable housing;
- The cost of the adaptation is prohibitive, and alternative solutions can be provided;
- The property's layout or structure makes adaptation unsafe or impractical;
- The tenant is, or wishes to be, on the housing transfer list;
- The tenant's needs are likely to change in the near future;
- The property's location renders the adaptation unsuitable in the long term;
- The adaptation will not reasonably meet the differing needs of households within the current property;
- The adaptation requires the consent of owners of other properties and that consent cannot be secured.

Furthermore, the Housing Service will not seek to carry out adaptations to upper floor properties, unless:

- The tenant does not have long-term mobility issues that affect access to the upper floor;
- The property is already fully adapted to meet the tenant's long-term housing needs;
- There is a demonstrated need for an adaptation on the upper floor, and no reasonable alternative (such as rehousing) is available.



If a tenant chooses to proceed with an adaptation against the Housing Service's recommendation, they may still apply for a permission to carry out the work, in accordance with the terms of Clackmannanshire Council's Tenancy Agreement. In such cases, the tenant will be responsible for funding and organising the adaptation, and will be responsible for reinstating the property to the original condition upon the termination of the tenancy.

12. Relocation

Where it is deemed that the adaptation is not suitable, the Housing Service will aim to engage with the tenant early to discuss and explore alternative housing solutions to support the tenant's independence and well-being. Where it is considered that a move to other suitable property would be possible and/or the best solution, priority banding will be given to the tenant's housing application to enable the move as soon as possible.

The Housing Service recognises that relocating to a new home can be a difficult decision, often involving emotional, practical, and community-related considerations. To support tenants through this process, the Service may offer a relocation package to the tenant. The package may offer financial support and assistance with the removal costs and/or practical support with house clearance and removal services.

Once a suitable alternative property becomes available, the tenant will be expected to accept the offer. While they wait, the Council will provide any urgent minor adaptations required, along with additional support where appropriate.

Where the household's circumstances change and the adapted property is no longer required to meet the needs of the tenant or the members of their household, and the property is required to meet the needs of a household with more urgent or specific needs, the Council may request the tenant to move to a more suitable property. This is to ensure that the Council makes the best use of its housing stock by freeing up adapted properties.

Where the tenant refuses to move, the Council may pursue legal action to regain the possession of the property, in line with Clackmannanshire Council's Eviction Policy and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

In cases where the Council proceeds with eviction action, the tenant will not be eligible for a relocation package.

13. Reassessing Rental Value Following Property Alterations

In certain circumstances, the Housing Service may consider property extensions or alterations where a household has assessed needs that cannot be met through existing housing arrangements. When the proposed solution involves an extension or significant alteration, this may result in substantial changes to the layout or size of the property.

Where such changes affect the overall attributes of the home, the Council reserves the right to reassess the rental value in accordance with its rent setting processes. Any adjustments to the



rent will be communicated to the tenant in line with Clackmannanshire Council's Tenancy Agreement, following appropriate notice.

14. Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Clackmannanshire Council is committed to the elimination of unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people.

The Council believes that equality of opportunity should be a guiding principle in all of its activities. The Council aims to ensure that its commitment to equality is embedded in all council services and in the organisations that it funds.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the Council is actively working towards the elimination of policies and practices that discriminate unfairly on grounds including age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

15. Privacy Statement

Clackmannanshire Council must adhere with its legal obligations under Data Protection Legislation as set out in the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Protection Regulation (GDPR).

In order to provide the required and/or requested services, the Council will collect, store and process relevant personal information or data.

Personal information may also be shared with other partner agencies and organisations.

Personal information will be kept securely, as long as required by law and/or by specific service requirements. Once the data is no longer required, it will be securely disposed of. The Council has a Record Retention Schedule which sets out the period of time and reasons for keeping particular records. The Retention Schedule is available on request.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, individuals have the right to access personal information and data held about them by Clackmannanshire Council as well as the right to access information from records held by the Council.

To submit a Subject Access or Freedom of Information request, please follow [the link](#).

To make a complaint in relation to the Council's handling and processing of personal data and information, please contact the [Information Commissioner's Office](#).

For further information on Clackmannanshire Council's data protection practices, please visit the Council's [Data Protection Statement](#). For the Council's Data Protection Policy, please follow the [link](#). For further information on freedom of information laws, please visit the [Scottish Information Commissioner webpage](#).



16. Complaints

If the tenant is dissatisfied with the provided services and/or the standards of service, please follow the Council's Complaints Procedure. Complaints can be made in person, in writing, by email or online. For further information on the Complaints Procedure and how to make a complaint, please visit the [Council's Complaints Procedure webpage](#).

If the tenant remains dissatisfied with the final decision or the way the complaint has been handled following the Council's Complaints Handling Procedure, they can make a complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) by completing a [complaints form found online](#) or calling on 0800 377 7330.

For further information on how to make a complaint to SPSO, please visit the [SPSO website](#).

17. Monitoring and Reviewing

The policy will be continuously monitored to ensure that it is performing efficiently against the aims set out in the policy.

The Council will review and evaluate this policy every 3 years to ensure the adherence to the relevant legislation and statutory guidance as well as changes in organisational practices and policies.