

Adaptations Policy

1. Summary

- 1.1. SHAL Housing is committed to meeting the needs of its tenants for independence, privacy and dignity. We aim to help people continue to live independently and comfortably in their homes for as long as possible, with the minimum intrusion or intervention.
- 1.2. This policy applies to disabled persons who are permanent residents in a SHAL home and who require aids and adaptations in their home.

2. Objectives

- 2.1. To ensure that the needs of disabled residents are prioritised and met accordingly, subject to the provision of available funding.
- 2.2. To set out the criteria by which SHAL will assess all requests for adaptation work and identify limitations to the service
- 2.3. To maximise Local Authority Grants, SHAL's own funding and other available resources for adaptations
- 2.4. To manage the expectations of tenants who require adaptations with SHAL's duty to manage its housing stock effectively
- 2.5. To comply with legal and statutory requirements in relation to the provision of disabled adaptations

3. Details

- 3.1. SHAL is committed to providing a high-quality aids and adaptations service to enable our tenants to live safely and more independently within their homes
- 3.2. Definitions
- 3.3. Using the social model of disability, an adaptation is a modification to a disabling environment or structures in order to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for individuals and their families – providing an

individualised solution to the problems experienced by people in a disabling environment

- 3.4. Adaptations are split in to two categories – minor and major. These distinctions are based on the nature of the work required in order to implement the adaptation and do not correspond to the impact the adaptation will have on the individual requiring such work. It is understood that both minor and major adaptation work can impact significantly on an individual’s quality of life
- 3.5. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a disabled person as ‘someone with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/ her ability to carry out normal day to day activities’
- 3.6. Minor adaptations (typically less than £1000) can include the following:
 - 3.6.1. Lever taps
 - 3.6.2. Grab rails
 - 3.6.3. Adjustment to door handles/ window latches
 - 3.6.4. Key safes
- 3.7. SHAL will cover the cost of some minor adaptation works where the need for the adaptation has been assessed, subject to budget availability
- 3.8. Major adaptations (typically more than £1000) can include the following:
 - 3.8.1. Stair lifts
 - 3.8.2. Walk in showers
 - 3.8.3. Lifts
 - 3.8.4. Ramps
 - 3.8.5. Hoists
- 3.9. All such applications should be referred for assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT) to determine whether or not an adaptation is required. SHAL can signpost tenants to the Local Authority and any relevant support agencies as required.

- 3.10. An application for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) should be submitted to the Local Authority to investigate if the requested adaptation is suitable for the tenants needs and falls within the scheme criteria.
- 3.11. Adaptations funded through the Local Authorities Disabled Facilities Grant are subject to means testing by the Council. They are also subject to landlord approval from SHAL.
- 3.12. Some tenants in need of adaptations may also be eligible to apply for other sources of funding i.e. ex forces personnel. SHAL will ensure that tenants are signposted to appropriate agencies if those agencies might be able to assist with tenant’s contribution or may be able to provide adaptations more quickly.
- 3.13. Feasibility assessment
 - 3.13.1. SHAL will undertake a feasibility assessment in exceptional cases, for example, when a tenant’s circumstances are complex and/ or the proposed adaptations may have a very significant impact on the property itself. Upon receipt of the OT referral, the feasibility assessment will be carried out in consultation with the OT along with the Housing Officer and Maintenance Manager. The feasibility assessment will seek to establish:
 - 3.13.2. If there is a possibility for the tenant to be moved to more suitable accommodation
 - 3.13.3. The implications of the adaptations work when the property becomes available for re-let, in particular on future allocations and under occupancy issues
 - 3.13.4. If the adaptation works are suitable for the tenant
 - 3.13.5. The feasibility of the adaptation in relation to the layout and structure of the property
 - 3.13.6. Whether the estimated cost of the adaptation work is likely to exceed the Local Authorities maximum grant provision

3.14. Transfer to suitable alternative accommodation

Current version	Date agreed/reviewed	Review due	Owner	Pages
1.0	2023-06	2025-06	HM	Page 3 of 7

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 SHAL is registered in England and Wales as a Community Benefit Society and an exempt charity (number 27772R).

- 3.15. Adaptations will not be carried out or agreed to in a property which is under-occupied by two bedrooms or more. SHAL will look to transfer tenants to a more suitable property. If there are no internal vacant homes or homes under notice, we will work with the tenant to register for the Choice Based Lettings System in order for them to access alternative housing.
- 3.16. Where it has been identified that a move to a more suitable property is both reasonable and practicable, SHAL reserves the right to refuse approval for the adaptations requested for the original home.
- 3.17. Completed Aids & Adaptations work
 - 3.17.1. All aids and adaptations work completed in a property will be recorded on the housing management system. Wherever practical, this information will be used to ensure that any future allocations are made to applicants requiring such adaptations.
 - 3.17.2. SHAL will work with the Local Authority wishing to develop a Disabled Housing Register, to facilitate the matching of disabled residents with properties suitably adapted for their needs.
 - 3.17.3. Information on the needs and requirements of disabled applicants will also be utilised to inform any subsequent development programs.
 - 3.17.4. Maintenance Obligations
 - 3.17.5. Some adaptations will be maintained by SHAL or our Contractors and will be subject to a service charge i.e. servicing of stairlifts.
 - 3.17.6. Shal has responsibility to ensure that all lifts in its homes are safe, serviced and repaired and include them in its compliance KPI reports to the Health and Safety Committee.
 - 3.17.7. As of April 2023 responsibility for servicing and repairs for all new Lift installations will fall to Somerset Independence Plus, Somerset Council.
 - 3.17.8. Shal will continue to have responsibility to ensure all lifts in its properties are safe and will keep up to date service records and will

continue to include lifts in its KPI's reports to the Health and Safety Committee.

3.17.9. Service charges may or may not be eligible for payment under Housing benefit or Universal Credit

3.17.10. We will work with those tenants who are unable to pay for the service charge and will refer to support agencies i.e. Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) where appropriate.

3.18. Future transfers and mutual exchanges

3.18.1. If tenants for whom SHAL or the Local Authority have undertaken adaptations wish to transfer or mutual exchange to another property, it is at SHAL's discretion to determine whether such a move can take place (see mutual exchange policy). Each case will be reviewed individually to take in to account personal circumstances and will include consultation with the tenant

3.18.2. Tenants who have received a Disabled Facilities Grant to fund their adaptation may also be subject to additional requirements imposed as a condition of funding, including being unable to move from the adapted home for a period of 5 years following the adaptation

3.19. Claiming back an adapted property

3.19.1. In accordance with housing legislation, SHAL has the right to claim back properties with major adaptations in the event that the person requiring the adaptation did not take up occupation or the occupants are no longer making full use of the adaptations; for example, if the property was acquired through Succession or the tenant needing the adaptations has found alternative accommodation.

4. Outcomes

4.1. SHAL tenants will have a clear process for requesting adaptations at their home

- 4.2. We will work closely with tenants, OT's and any support services to ensure tenants are able to remain living independently for as long as possible in their current home

5. Consultation

- 5.1. A draft copy of this policy will be available on our website to allow members of the public an opportunity to comment on its contents prior to being submitted for approval by SHAL's board.
- 5.2. All tenants will be contacted by text to advise of its availability online and a draft copy will also be made available on request.
- 5.3. SHAL's tenant scrutiny panel will also be invited to review the policy and suggest any comments and amendments prior to the policy being approved by the board.

6. Equality and Diversity

- 6.1. We will apply our Aids & Adaptations policy in a fair and consistent manner and will not discriminate against anyone based on their age, gender, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or any other matter that may cause a person to be treated with injustice.
- 6.2. The needs of vulnerable residents will be considered in accordance with the pre-action protocol for possession based on rent arrears and the Equality Act 2010.

7. Value for Money

- 7.1. We will regularly review our processes to ensure resources and services are providing best value for money to our residents.

8. Owner

8.1. Housing Manager

9. Version and Revisions

9.1. This policy will be reviewed every 2 year(s)

9.2. Revisions

New version	Date	Revision details
1	07/06/2023	No changes identified