



## ADAPTATION POLICY

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## INTRODUCTION

This Policy outlines the approach taken by Castlehill Housing Association when dealing with requests for adaptations to properties.

CHA aims to facilitate the efficient administration of carrying out adaptations for our tenants subject to the availability of funding.

The responsibility for administering adaptations lies with Property Services.

Records for all ongoing adaptations shall be kept centrally within the office. The progress of these will be reviewed on a regular basis.

The relevant Committee will be informed of the number of adaptations carried out on a quarterly basis and the funding status thereof. As required regulatory information is also reported to Scottish Government and the Scottish Housing Regulator and conforms with our requirements under The Tenants Charter.

Adaptations carried out will be entered in QL and recorded as a property element. In accordance with CHA Data Protection policy the OT referral report will be kept for two financial years only. At the end of the two years these reports will be destroyed.

CHA is committed to complying with the Equality Act 2010. We aim to ensure that in all our policies and decision making there is no unfair discrimination on issues of: gender, marital status, age, ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation, disability, or any other relevant ground. We aim to make our services as accessible as possible and will endeavour to provide information in appropriate forms for those requiring it.

CHA will carry out adaptations for tenants occupying a property as their only and principal home.

This policy is in accordance with the relevant legislation:

Housing (Scotland) Act 2010

Equality Act 2010

Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act 1972

## DEFINITIONS

**Occupational Therapist Referral:** the written report that CHA receives following the personal assessment of tenants' requirements.

**Adaptations to Housing:** Adaptations are permanent or semi-permanent changes to a house and are classified as:

**Temporary Adaptations:** those that are not fixed and may be moved e.g. free-standing shower seat.

**Permanent Adaptations:** those that will remain in the property. They are funded by the Scottish Government and are classified as minor or major

**Minor:** defined as a change that does not affect the overall structure of the dwelling, e.g. hand-rails, handles, grab rails.

**Major:** defined as permanent or structural change to the dwelling e.g. widening doors, kitchen adaptations, and level access showers.

**Major Stage 2:** large work usually to extend a property or build in significant changes at construction stage.

**Major stage 3:** work required within an existing property ranging from level access showers to replacing taps.

**Decanting:** when a tenant needs to be moved to another property for major building work.

**Snagging:** The inspection of work after installation. Any faults are reported back to contractor to make good.

**Mainstream housing:** Properties that are designated for and let to single people and families.

#### **Abbreviations:**

**CHA:** Castlehill Housing Association

**OT:** Occupational Therapist

**TO:** Technical Officer (Castlehill HA)

## **THE ADAPTATION PROCESS**

**Initial enquiry** can be made directly by the tenant, carer, relative, or by another agency.

**Self-Referral to the OT service:** Tenants should approach the OT Service direct, to request an assessment for adaptations.

**Occupational Therapist Assessment:** An OT will meet with the tenant and assess their medical conditions and the impact on their mobility/use of their property. The OT will forward their report with recommendations for work needed to be carried out direct to CHA.

**Carrying out the work:** CHA will manage and instruct a contractor to carry out the work. Large scale adaptations and/or high-cost works will be carried out in accordance with our procurement policy.

**Adaptations not technically feasible (or impracticable).** When the proposed adaptation is not technically feasible nor financially viable, approval for the refusal of the request will be sought from the relevant Director. CHA will liaise with the OT and the tenant to consider other options with a focus on sourcing alternative accommodation.

When the best solution would be a move to an alternative accommodation, CHA will, in conjunction with the OT, consider carrying out urgent minor adaptations to the tenant's current home.

**Inspection:** Castlehill will inspect a sample of works during and after completion before signing off as complete.

**Feedback:** A questionnaire will be issued to each tenant asking for feedback about the service and the work. Replies will be used to improve the service.

**Adaptation's funding:** Current funding is provided direct by the Scottish Government and allocated yearly. When the funding allocation for CHA is spent and OT referrals continue to be received, CHA will contact Scottish Government and try to secure additional funding. If no additional funding is secured all referrals will be held on a waiting list. The waiting list will be held by date order from receipt of the OT referral. If no

funding is received CHA may, where possible, consider carrying out minor adaptations e.g. handrails, within the limit of any existing CHA adaptations budget.

Where a waiting list is in operation tenants will be notified in writing and OT will be notified by email. The referrals on the waiting list will be dealt with as a priority when funding is allocated, and this work will be completed strictly in date order. Due to the potential time delay CHA will contact the OT to confirm the tenants needs remain unchanged before proceeding with the waiting list referrals.

## ADAPTED HOUSING PORTFOLIO

**Voids:** CHA will ensure that all void inspections carried out by Maintenance Officers, will record, and accurately reflect adaptations that have been carried out. All ground floor properties and flatted accommodation with lift access will be assessed by Housing Officers for suitability by an applicant who is disabled or has restricted mobility.

**Planned Maintenance:** CHA planned maintenance programmes will consider tenants mobility needs when planning programmes.

**Sheltered properties:** bathroom upgrade programmes will, as standard, install level access showers.

**New build:** Housing Officers will offer new build property, which has been designed to wheelchair standard, to a household that needs wheelchair accommodation.

**New build (Stage 2 major adaptations):** At construction stage, if a property is identified as requiring adaptations, CHA will endeavour to futureproof the property for the current and future tenant. For example, reinforcing roof joists in case of a future requirement for a ceiling hoist.

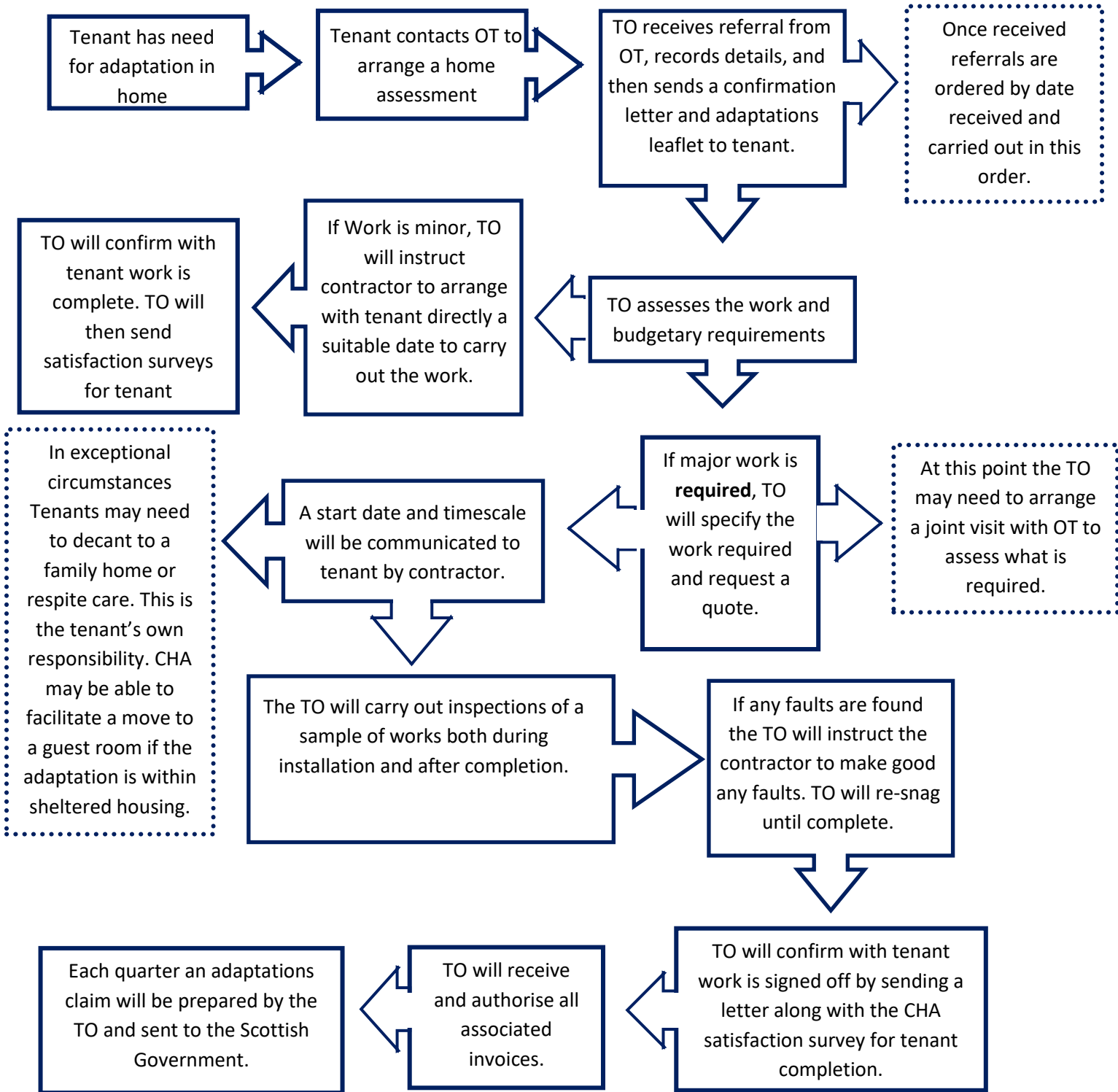
**Mainstream properties:** When planning programmes, consideration will be given to replacing shower cubicles with level access showers in ground floor properties only. Additional features such as grab rails etc, may also be considered.

**Wheelchair Housing:** This consists of dwellings constructed specifically for people confined to a wheelchair. They are designed to give extra floor area, special bathroom, kitchen, and other features.

**Sharing Owners:** Castlehill's adaptations funding is only applicable for Castlehill tenants. Sharing owners are not classified as CHA tenants, instead, they are owner-occupiers, and will need to self-finance these works and/or apply for other appropriate funding. Sharing owners may be eligible for relevant Local Authority private sector funding

**Property let to other agencies:** Castlehill's adaptations funding is only applicable for individual Castlehill tenants. When a property is let to another agency/landlord who in turn lets to its own residents/tenant's adaptations cannot be funded by Castlehill. The agency/resident will need to self-finance these works and apply for other appropriate funding. In exceptional circumstances Castlehill may consider contributing to the cost of the adaptation if the work would benefit the building in the future. This will not be the case if the adaptation is specialised to meet an individual resident's particular need.

# PROCEDURE



**KEY:**

CHA = Castlehill Housing Association

OT = Occupational Therapist

TO = Technical Officer

## ADAPTATION POLICY CONDITIONS

**Work required:** CHA will only carry out medical adaptation work stated in the OT referral. If a tenant disagrees with the OT specification or wishes to make amendments CHA cannot approve these requests. CHA will refer the case back to the OT for further consideration.

**Tenant improvements:** Tenants can request permission to carry out works themselves at their own cost in accordance with the tenant improvement or tenant alteration policy. CHA is unable to carry out partial works or contribute to these costs.

**Fire safety:** When planning for any alterations CHA must take into consideration fire safety for the whole building. If we believe an adaptation will compromise fire safety, we will request guidance from our fire consultant and proceed following their recommendations.

CHA will not rehang or make any alterations to fire doors but can adjust their closing mechanisms.

**Auto Doors:** On receipt of OT referral, we will endeavour to make at least one block entrance door, auto door accessible if it is not already. This can be either the front or back door. Accessibility will be discussed with the tenant and OT prior to installation.

Auto Doors will be installed as per OT referral for tenants' personal front doors.

**Level Access Showers:** in sheltered and amenity properties level access showers will be fitted on any floor as per the OT request. In general needs properties, level access showers will only be installed in ground floor properties, (and where technically feasible). If a level access shower cannot be installed CHA will refer the case back to OT to consider alternative options e.g. a low threshold shower cubicle.

Where a toilet frame is required in a level access shower room, CHA will request that one with rubber feet is used in place of a floor fixed one. If it must be a floor fixed frame, authorisation will be required from CHA management before installation.

**Stair Lifts:** Will only be installed in communal staircases in sheltered or amenity blocks, upon receipt of OT referral. Due to fire safety regulations, stair lifts will not be considered for general needs properties.

**Ramps:** CHA will only consider non-permanent forms of ramp (i.e. metal or wooden) upon receipt of OT referral. Concrete ramps will only be considered as part of a stage 2 adaptation.

**Decanting:** Due to their medical conditions tenants in sheltered accommodation may wish to temporarily move out while their home is being adapted. If available, the scheme guest room may be booked. No charge will be made to the tenant for guest room use. If no guest room is available, CHA may offer the next closest scheme's guest room if available, however tenants will be responsible for arranging their travel and any associated costs. If neither option is suitably available, tenants should make their own arrangements for decanting, and if specialist respite care is required, the tenant/care manager will be responsible for arranging this.

**Loss of Facilities:** During bathroom adaptations CHA will endeavour in all cases to provide a functioning toilet at the end of each working day. Tenants will be required to make alternative bathing arrangements.

**Colours:** When adapting a bathroom, CHA will fit white wet wall and grey non-slip flooring as standard. There is no option for the tenant to choose colours or contribute towards costs of providing alternative materials/colours.

**Cosmetic Protection:** Kick plates, or protection around door frames etc. where the purpose of the installation is to protect the existing features from damage, are deemed as cosmetic as they do not directly improve quality of life or enable independent living. As such, cosmetic protection is not covered by adaptations funding.

**Adding to existing fixtures:** If an adaptation requires the addition of fixtures, e.g. additional wet-wall areas or wall units, CHA will attempt to match the existing fixtures colours as best as possible. Unless there is a medical reason specified by the OT that all fixtures must match exactly, CHA cannot replace existing fixtures to match the new ones.

**Access Refused:** If CHA or the contractors are not able to gain reasonable access to carry out the adaptation, work will not go ahead or will be deferred. CHA will close the case and refer it back to the OT to make alternative arrangements. If the OT has closed the case, the tenant will have to restart the process.

**Removal of Adaptations:** Tenants can request that freestanding equipment (temporary) can be removed if it is deemed no longer necessary.

For permanent adaptations, existing tenants will be advised at the time of installation, that CHA will not remove these for the remainder of their tenancy.

For permanent adaptations, new tenants when accepting a property will be required to accept the current permanent adaptations within that property. These will not be removed by Castlehill, nor will permission be given to a tenant to remove these.

## ALLOCATIONS OF EXISTING ADAPTED PROPERTIES

Castlehill works in partnership to allocate their vacant properties via a Choice Based Lettings System. Choice Based Lettings is a system of allocation that allows applicants to bid for properties that they are interested in. This is currently delivered using the '*These Homes*'.

When properties are identified as wheelchair adapted, or level access, this information is publicised in the '*These Homes*' advertisement. Any applicant can apply for the property however priority will always be considered for applicants who have a wheelchair or level access requirement. Where several applicants meet this criteria housing need priority will then be considered.

Housing Officers will not normally allocate without completing a visit to the applicant's current accommodation. This allows the opportunity for the adaptations and the applicant's compatibility with the property to be considered. Where the Housing Officer believes that the property would not be suitable due to the applicants needs or where it is possible funding will not be available, this would be discussed with them. Legislation does not allow Castlehill to bypass an applicant from an offer because the property is not suitable but the practical issues around the suitability will be raised. Applicants will be advised that if they accept the offer for the property funding cannot be guaranteed. Applicants will also be informed that if adaptations cannot be carried out, they will not have any priority for a transfer within Castlehill's stock.

Housing Officers will provide the Adaptations leaflet for applicants at the home visit stage before an offer is made to ensure that they are aware of the limitations and timescales involved in the implementation of this policy.



## APPENDIX 1

### Targets & timescales for processing adaptations

Note: All timescales are dependent on funding availability. e.g. if no funding is available at the time a referral is received, we would not carry out a joint visit till nearer the time funding is due.

Stage	Action	Target timescale
<b>Referral received</b>	CHA TO to acknowledge receipt of the referral, record the details, and send a confirmation letter and adaptations leaflet to tenant.	Within 5 working days***
CHA TO will assess the work required as <b>minor</b> or <b>major</b> .		
Minor Adaptation	Action	Target Timescale
<b>Instruction</b>	TO will request that the contractor contacts the tenant directly to arrange and carry out the work.	Within 20 working days **
<b>Signing Off</b>	TO will notify OT of completion of works and send satisfaction survey to tenant.	Notification within 5 working days of receiving completion notice.

Major Adaptation	Action	Target Timescale
<b>Joint Visit</b>	Where necessary a Joint Visit with the TO, contractor and OT will take place to specify and agree on requirements	Within 15 working days *
<b>Instruction</b>	Once work and quote agreed, TO will instruct contractor. Contractor will agree a suitable start date with the tenant.	Within 40 working days **
<b>Work</b>	Work will commence at agreed start date and will be completed within a timescale which the tenant will be advised of.	
<b>Snagging</b>	TO will carry out snagging inspection.	Within 5 working days of completion of work. **/**
<b>Signing Off</b>	Once snagging is complete, TO will sign the job off as complete. TO will notify OT of completion of works and send satisfaction survey to tenant.	Notification within 5 working days of signing off.

\*Dependent on availability of OT  
 \*\*Dependent on availability of tenant  
 \*\*\*Dependant on availability of TO